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**One Way to Live: Orde Wingate and the Adoption of
'Special Forces' Tactics and Strategies (1903-1944)**

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Dedication

To Ami Pedahzur and Wm. Roger Louis
who guided me on this endeavor from start to finish

and

To Lorna Paterson Wingate Smith.

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Any errors, omissions, or faults are entirely of my own making.

Abstract

One Way to Live: Orde Wingate and the Adoption of 'Special Forces' Tactics and Strategies (1903-1944)

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Winston Churchill declared Major-General Orde Wingate 'a man of genius' for developing what he considered low-cost, high-risk, and high-leverage operations in three theaters of the Second World War. *One Way to Live: Orde Wingate and the adoption of 'special forces' tactics and strategies (1903-1944)* tries to answer two questions: Why did Wingate and his superiors adopt 'special forces' strategies and tactics, and why did individuals choose to join his 'special forces' units? I use biography and comparative biography to help answer these two questions. I provide a narrative of Wingate's life, but I also construct biographical sketches of some of his peers, rivals, superiors, and followers during his campaigns in Sudan, Mandatory Palestine, Abyssinia, and Burma. I ultimately find that while Wingate's unusual upbringing contributed to his propensity for creating new military units, it was ultimately his aggressive competition with other British officers for scarce honor and prestige that spurred him to create the units he branded 'special forces.' His leaders, on the other hand, adopted Wingate's special forces strategies out of desperation, and only when they lacked the resources to win 'traditional' campaigns. Wingate's followers did not always volunteer to join his units (compulsion occurred in several instances), but many officers joined his ranks with the intention of obtaining a role in violent combat; like Wingate, they sought the prestige and role-fulfillment that some soldiers seek through war. Despite the inherent risks of special forces tactics, many soldiers

paradoxically thought their odds of survival were higher with Wingate than in traditional military formations. In many instances, the competition between soldiers required more personal investment than any action against the 'enemy.'

The extensive use of comparative biography encourages the examination of previously unused sources, including unpublished memoirs and oral histories. My writing, at times, examines stories that do not answer the central questions of the dissertation, but provide a rich understanding of the behavior of British soldiers in Palestine, Abyssinia, and elsewhere. As a social scientist, I attempt to understand the subject as a salient example of organized violence, and not just as a series of unique historical incidents.

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1. Introduction

Orde Wingate and the adoption of 'special forces' tactics and strategies (1903-1944)

The actions of Major-General Orde Charles Wingate provide the narrative backbone of this dissertation. Wingate was a British army officer from the time of his graduation from the Royal Military Academy Woolwich in 1923 to his death in an airplane crash in 1944. He became famous for his extravagant risk-taking, his unorthodox methods of organizing and deploying his forces, his extensive use of Judeo-Christian imagery to inspire his troops, and (eventually) his high casualty rates. His methods had a pervasive influence on future generations of soldiers, and shaped how Britain and the United States fought wars in British Malaysia, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. In 1938, in British Palestine, Wingate founded Jewish-British units called Special Night Squads; these units are now considered the forerunners of the modern Israeli Defense Forces. Israeli leaders like Moshe Dayan credited Wingate for inspiring modern Zionism's turn towards aggressive action against what Wingate considered Arab 'bandits.' In 1941, Wingate founded a Sudanese-Ethiopian-British unit called 'Gideon Force,' and led it against the Italian occupiers of Abyssinia. In 1943 and 1944 Wingate organized and led yet another new formation, the 'Chindits;' these troops fought against the Japanese in the colonial province of Burma, a region that grips the northeastern shores of the Bay of Bengal. Wingate

liked to call his units 'special forces,' and his style, methods, and training set precedents that Western militaries continue to follow; this is an interesting development, because many of Wingate's more successful British peers (including Bernard Montgomery and William Slim) considered Wingate an unsuccessful fraud who threw away the lives of the soldiers that followed him into battle.¹ Building on previous studies from Christopher Sykes,² Shelford Bidwell,³ and Simon Anglim,⁴ my dissertation offers a biographical analysis of Orde Wingate while focusing on two key questions that help us understand broader trends in modern warfare: Why do leaders choose to adopt special forces tactics and strategies? And why do soldiers choose to join such units?

I have come to believe strongly that answering these two questions requires an understanding of human developmental tendencies; to state the problem more broadly, how can human psychology and human development inform the study of military operations? My interest in human development led me to place more weight on the emotional responses of Wingate's acquaintances; I often wanted to know how they *felt* about his actions, and their own. Emotions lead to hunches, speculations, and unconfirmed suspicions, but also signal a

¹ Moshe Dayan, *Moshe Dayan: Story of My Life* (New York: Da Capo, 1992); William Joseph Slim Viscount Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (London: Cassell, 1956).

² Christopher Sykes, *Orde Wingate, a Biography* (Cleveland World Pub. Co, 1959).

³ Shelford Bidwell, *The Chindit War: Stilwell, Wingate, and the Campaign in Burma, 1944* (New York: Macmillan, 1980).

⁴ Simon Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century* (London: Pen & Sword, 2014).

keen awareness of the inexplicit costs of military behavior.⁵ During my study, I made use of many unused archival sources (including audio interviews and unpublished manuscripts) that affected the broad shape of Wingate's story in unexpected ways.⁶ Human sexuality, status, and intragroup competition, for example, play a surprisingly critical role in shaping the choices of individual soldiers—but 'choice' may not be the best word. The individuals choose in the sense that their behavior varies among a wide-range of possible activities and attitudes. Some soldiers, like Wingate's best lieutenants, Michael Calvert and Anthony Simonds, whole-heartedly embraced what they perceived as the opportunity to undertake an exciting and independent type of warfare.⁷ Others, like Peter Acland, responded to Wingate with lasting antipathy and resentment; Acland resented Wingate's swift rise through the ranks, and felt that 'special forces' simply meant inventing half-baked answers to unsolvable logistical and strategic riddles.⁸ Regardless of their reaction to Wingate, the soldiers around him devoted tremendous time and energy to arguing, begging, cajoling, defending and attacking each other, rather than the

⁵ L. Cosmides and J. Tooby, "Evolutionary Psychology and the Emotions," in *Handbook of Emotions*, ed. M. Lewis and J. M. Haviland-Jones (New York: Guildford Press, 2000); Laith Al-Shawaf and David Lewis, "Evolutionary Psychology and the Emotions," in *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*, ed. V. Zeigler-Hill and T.K. Shackelford (Cham, Switzerland Springer 2017).

⁶ Lorna Paterson, *Audio Memoir of Lorna Paterson Wingate Smith* (Cotswolds, UK: Private Collection of Lucy Catling, 1973; 1974).

⁷ Anthony Simonds, "Pieces of War," (Imperial War Museum, London, 1985); J. M. interviewed by Conrad Wood Calvert, *Oral History 9942 with J. M. Calvert* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1987).

⁸ P. B. E. interviewed by Conrad Wood Acland, *Oral History 11584 with Peter Bevil Edward Acland* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1990).

'enemy.' The pattern found here is not quite internecine, but rather one of persistent competition, and it is a pattern that holds elsewhere in the study of organized violence.

Despite facing intense competition from foreign enemies, soldiers spend far more time competing with each other than fighting their mutual opponent, even when that opponent is as powerful and infamous as the Axis powers during the Second World War. The study of warfare reaches back three-thousand years; the finding that soldiers compete with one another is hardly novel. Book one of Homer's *Iliad* begins with Achilles, the best Greek soldier, arguing with his commander over the spoils of war.⁹ Thucydides opens his history of the Peloponnesian war by recounting vigorous debates within the city of Sparta.¹⁰ Stephen Peter Rosen's recent thesis, *War and Human Nature*, argues that tyrannical war leaders tune-out dissenting peers and rivals in their greed for status.¹¹ But soldiers, specialists, and military scholars often gloss over such internal conflict in their rush to describe battle.¹² The proportion of writing devoted to internal competition and decision-making is not commensurate with the amount of time soldiers actually spend doing it.¹³ The dissertation takes a step in correcting that imbalance, and necessarily

⁹ Homer, Richmond Lattimore, and Richard P. Martin, *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

¹⁰ Thucydides, Robert B. Strassler, and Richard Crawley, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

¹¹ Stephen Peter Rosen, *War and Human Nature* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹² Cathal J. Nolan, *The Allure of Battle : A History of How Wars Have Been Won and Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹³ When researchers do examine an emotion in modern combat, they are likely to focus on the manipulation and management of fear, especially at relates to competition against an 'out-group'. Eyal Ben-Ari, *Mastering Soldiers: Conflict, Emotions, and the Enemy in an Israeli Military Unit*, vol. 10 (Berghahn Books, 1998); Joanna Bourke, "The Emotions in War: Fear and the British and American

examines the emotions, impulses, and behaviors that occur in the throes of war, both in its noisy seconds and quiet hours. As a historian, I do not assume that their behavior as soldiers strictly adheres to a 'rational choice' model, but like a social scientist, I do assume that behavior tends to unconsciously conform to 'rational,' predictable patterns: I hold the view that biological evolution undergirds human behavior, and shapes and limits its possibilities in remarkable ways. Still, for the sake of readability, I slide most of the theorizing into the introduction and appendix, and the bulk of the dissertation concentrates on matters of interest to a wider audience.

I examine the narrative of Wingate's life, but I also provide biographical sketches of some of his peers, rivals, superiors, and followers. The extensive use of comparative biography led me to examine stories that do not directly answer the central questions of my dissertation, but do provide a rich understanding of the behavior of British soldiers in Palestine, Abyssinia, and elsewhere.

1. OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION

The present chapter outlines the scope, purpose, and tendencies of the study. In this chapter, I place a particular emphasis on the relationship between two rival approaches to studying organized violent behavior—history and science—and argue that history provides a way to jump ethical and practical hurdles presented by the scientific study of human violence. When using history, I lean heavily on a biographical, cradle-to-grave approach to sketching characters and placing them within their particular time period. In social science parlance, my

Military, 1914–45," *Historical Research* 74, no. 185 (2001); Jonathan Gratch and Stacy Marsella, "Fight the Way You Train: The Role and Limits of Emotions in Training for Combat," *The Brown Journal of world affairs* 10, no. 1 (2003).

'unit of analysis' is human life, and this shapes the particular way in which I understand the social phenomena that interest me. It leads me to focus on Orde Wingate, his followers, and his peers in a biographical style, but to do so while allowing wider questions about organized violence to move my investigation forward.

Following the theme of my first chapter, my second examines Orde Wingate's birth, family structure, upbringing, and adolescent development. While birth and childhood do not fully determine adult behavior, they do provide a time for an individual's socialization, and their early reckoning with the world around them. Wingate's early learning experiences bring to mind the lessons of evolutionary psychologists Leda Cosmides and John Tooby¹⁴: The physical conditions surrounding Wingate (his environment) evoked particular behaviors (especially perhaps his stubbornness, depression, and contrariness); meanwhile Wingate's parents, teachers, and peers transmitted particular ideas, values, and representations to him. In particular, Wingate's parents and his social environment established the criteria by which he could measure himself in terms of dominance and prestige—or what is commonly called self-esteem.¹⁵

¹⁴ Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides, and John Tooby, *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

¹⁵ J. Barkow, *Darwin, Sex, and Status: Biological Approaches to Mind and Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989). Considered within the framework of evolutionary psychology, prestige served as a mechanism for motivating Wingate to earn respect among peers, and determine whom to challenge and to whom to submit. The twin phrases 'prestige' and 'honor' were qualities that one of Wingate's contemporaries, George Orwell, loved to acknowledge and mock in his peers. George Orwell, *Burmese Days* (New York: Harcourt Inc, 1934), 78-79. The interplay between dominance and prestige is of continued interest, as seen in J. T. Cheng et al., "Two Ways to the Top: Evidence That Dominance and

The third chapter traces the early years of Wingate's career, especially through the eyes of his best friend, Derek Tulloch.¹⁶ After a restless few years as a subaltern, Wingate spent a few more restless years studying Arabic and posting to the Sudan Defence Force—a move which was partly motivated by his desire to avoid marrying his fiancé, and partly for the prestige of holding an independent command in the desert. Rather than simply reiterating the arguments of his biographers, I place Wingate in perspective by examining the lives of other soldiers and civil servants whose careers followed similar paths in the Sudan.

The fourth chapter examines the evidence for Wingate's romantic life in the 1930s, including his discarding of his fiancé for a much younger (and wealthier) woman, and the ways in which his sexual behavior influenced his military career. In the company of his young wife, and after having sold himself to her as a man of action, mystery, and power, he deployed as a staff officer for the British military units responsible for securing Mandatory Palestine. As a part of my study of this period, I examine his wife's assertion that he used intelligence missions in Palestine as cover for extra-marital affairs. Following a more martial tune, Wingate joined a number of other British officers in favoring nighttime operations over daytime patrols; he also favored integrating British soldiers with Jewish supernumeraries, despite substantial political pushback from the Palestinian civil authorities. Interestingly, Wingate, unlike his peers, became famous for his military actions in Palestine, and is still well-regarded in Zionist circles as the founder of the Special Night Squads. As with the previous chapter, my strategy is to compare and contrast Wingate's story with those who served below, above, and beside him. Echoing the arguments recently made by military historian Simon Anglim, I find that Wingate's apparent

Prestige Are Distinct yet Viable Avenues to Social Rank and Influence," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 104, no. 1 (2013).

¹⁶ Derek Tulloch, *Wingate in Peace and War* (London: Macdonald and Co, 1972).

Zionism and tactical approach do not stand out in stark relief when compared with other British soldiers.¹⁷ His violent behavior appears almost minimal next to that of his peers. But he did stand out for the organizational skills he brought to intelligence gathering, his relish for training, and his participatory engagement with local cultures, especially the secular kibbutz movement.

The fifth chapter again places Wingate in comparative perspective, but this time explores the sweep of Wingate's actions during the Second World War, especially what he deemed his 'special force' campaigns in Abyssinia and Burma. In Abyssinia, sexuality again played a strong and underreported role in Wingate's campaigns. The Sudanese and Ethiopian soldiers he commanded commonly took on 'war wives' as companions; the British enlisted personnel also took up the practice; sexually transmitted diseases and the costs of reproductive effort added to the difficulties of the campaign, but the 'war wives' also provided one of the strongest incentives for the soldiers to keep fighting during an isolated campaign against numerically superior and better equipped Italian forces. Strife among the British officers again proved a dominant theme. At the conclusion of the Abyssinian campaign, Wingate's failure to acquire military honors and better pay for his soldiers directly contributed to his suicide attempt in Cairo in 1941.

Field Marshal Archibald Wavell, one of Wingate's commanders and supporters in both Palestine and Abyssinia, summoned him to Burma less than two years later as the Japanese tore their way through British colonies on the way to the Indian subcontinent; the Japanese reached the absolute limit of their advance in Burma, and Burma was where Wingate would, in a two-year blink of time, make his largest mark in the history books. Unlike in his previous campaigns, Wingate relied almost exclusively on European soldiers and British Gurkhas to form his 'Chindit' columns. These were light infantry units that he expected to penetrate deep into

¹⁷ Anglim.

the jungle and disrupt Japanese supply lines; here, their reception by the local populace varied widely, as the villagers did not trust either the British or the Japanese and had no interest in the success of either group. Further, the campaigns consisted of long-range maneuver warfare, with little of the local politics that took place in Sudan, Palestine, or Abyssinia. Unlike those earlier campaigns, there was no effort to establish legitimate political authority in Burma—the overwhelming strategic goal of the British Army was to use minimal resources to poke, prod, and defeat the Japanese soldiers that had taken over a British colony. The concern for local politics nearly vanished, but the politics of honor within the military itself was as vicious as ever; and the stakes were high enough that the game continued to be played well after Wingate's death. Some officers who had supported Wingate during his life, such as Field Marshal William Slim, began retracting their praise several years after Wingate's death, and came to view the Chindit operations as strategic dead-ends that served no real purpose in defeating the Japanese. During the years between the First and Second World Wars, promotions were scarce in the British Army; the Second World War created many opportunities for officers with stalled careers (including Wingate), but some fared better than others, and at least some of the resentment towards Wingate stemmed from his quick progression from captain to major-general, and his post-war fame. A more serious source of resentment, however, were the brutally high casualty rates that his men suffered in Burma; it was a minor theatre of operations, and the British had few spare bodies to fill the shoes of the missing and the dead. Still, most Chindit veterans became intensely proud of their service in a 'Special Force,' and many became famous advocates for the exact sort of warfare that had gotten so many of their friends killed: train hard, fight cheap, and win honor. But honor is scarce, even in wartime, and so the competition for military honor results in bitter struggles for command opportunities, military resources, and attention from the press.

2. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

I ultimately find that Wingate's leaders initially adopted special forces tactics when facing a severe deficit of resources—a sense of loss—but that their initial commitment to such modes of warfare lacked 'brakes';¹⁸ in other words, the noise and status associated with special operations created a self-perpetuating, semi-independent army whose resourcing could only be stopped with a counterbalancing, massive success on the part of conventional forces.¹⁹ Individual soldiers chose to join special forces units because of two seemingly contradictory impulses; first, they personally perceived special operations methods as safer for themselves than conventional warfighting (but evidence shows it was in fact much more dangerous); second, the soldiers desired the higher status accorded to special forces units.²⁰ Special operations leaders often rewarded their soldiers with promises of extra pay and promotion, military medals, and even increased access to sexual partners. But leaders also promised a

¹⁸ Several political science studies show links between a 'domain of loss' and an increase in risk-taking. See Rose McDermott, "Prospect Theory in International Relations: The Iranian Hostage Rescue Mission," *Political Psychology* (1992). "Prospect Theory in Political Science: Gains and Losses from the First Decade," *Political Psychology* 25, no. 2 (2004). Both of McDermott's studies makes use of the 'prospect theory' first proposed by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk," *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society* (1979).

¹⁹ In Abyssinia in 1941, the conventional victories of Platt and Cunningham overwhelmed the 'buzz' surrounding Wingate's simultaneous campaign. In Burma, Slim's more conventional campaign eventually retook Burma in 1945.

²⁰ For examples of clear status-seeking, see Bernard Fergusson, *Beyond the Chindwin: Being an Account of the Adventure of Number Five Column of the Wingate Expedition into Burma 1943* (London Collins, 1945; 2009; repr., Pen and Sword). R. King-Clark, *Free for a Blast* (London: Greenville Publishing Company Limited, 1988).

more rigorous commitment to training, and a more honorable role in combat operations. Soldiers rejected or denigrated special operations if service in conventional forces could assure them of the opportunity for advancement, security, and the perception of safety. They also rejected special operations methods if, prior to joining the unit, they did not go through an indoctrination period that required a costly personal investment of time and energy in quasi-realistic training exercises.²¹ Leaders who successfully organized special operations units possessed a strong imagination; they imagined and designed (and even fantasized) honorable victories, and communicated those concepts to their superiors and subordinates; the honorable victory promised to require fewer resources than a more conventional alternative, and it also promised to enable individual members of the unit to imagine their own survival and escape.

The complex relationship between what special forces are, and what they claim to do, can be enlightened with a specific example of the most optimistic assessment of their capabilities—to that end, here is an extended quote from Charles J. Rolo, the American journalist whose 1944 account of Wingate's first expedition in Burma placed Wingate's star—and special operations—in the firmament of military imagination:

Wingate's unorthodox, spectacularly successful conception of warfare is a fantastic combination of the primitive and the modern. He himself is a natural-born guerrilla leader—fearless, inexhaustible, always alive to the unexpected. [...] Yet this fanatical exponent of the rapier-like commando thrust is also the man responsible for introducing to guerrilla warfare a Wellsian blend of modern science. He built the Burma expedition around daring new uses of the plane and the radio [...] He is an expert in scientific nutrition [...] A master of propaganda, he has a genius for winning co-operation from the

²¹ The training enabled 'dissonance reduction'. Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (1962). Especially clear examples found in Bidwell, 62-63.

natives of a country; in Ethiopia and Burma as well as in Palestine his intelligence system was infallible.²²

Strong language, and entirely consistent with most descriptions of special operations: unorthodox, spectacular, successful, guerrilla, fearless, fanatical, inexhaustible, modern, scientific, infallible. It is a swirl of language, and not entirely consistent. Science rarely lends itself to fanaticism or infallibility or even fearlessness. Yet that is the combination that Rolo propagated, not just for readers of war writing but in one variation or another for the readers of *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The Reader's Digest*.²³ The selling points that Rolo describes are exactly why special operations prove attractive to commanders and soldiers, and the contradictions are why they prove unsuccessful.

There is a deeper and perhaps more abstract puzzle that I pry from the life of Orde Wingate. As the strategist and scholar Lawrence Freedman points out, military strategy ultimately involves three components: deception, coalition formation, and the instrumental use of violence.²⁴ In the following study, we will see that for the individuals involved in a war, the instrumental use of violence is of secondary importance; their primary efforts go towards the dynamics of coalition building itself, and heated internal competitions for "goodness".²⁵ Yet

²² Charles James Rolo, *Wingate's Raiders: An Account of the Fabulous Adventure That Raised the Curtain on the Battle for Burma* (New York: The Viking Press, 1944)., pg 21.

²³ Ibid., book jacket description of the Rolo's writings on Wingate.

²⁴ Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford;New York;: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²⁵ Coalition building and warfighting are, to borrow a phrase from Rose McDermott, "flip sides of the same coin", as seen in Richard W. Wrangham, *The Goodness Paradox : The Strange Relationship between Virtue and Violence in Human Evolution* (2019). Rose McDermott's comment came to me through a personal correspondence (March, 2020). William James thought of coalition building as "war's

when successful leaders create the narrative of the wars they participated in, they tend to prioritize the planning, execution, and results of instrumental violence, and minimize their discussion of coalition building, especially the ruthless bureaucratic arguments that consume military staffs and infantry squads throughout the world.

In terms of safety, status, and biological reproductive effort, participating in violence is very risky, and perhaps that is why human beings caught in the Second World War found narratives of violence 'stickier' than the more frequent instances of coalition building.

Interestingly, officers and soldiers in the Second World War dreaded the awful shadows of the Great War of 1914-1918, a bloody, grinding conflict of trench warfare that thoroughly shaped Twentieth Century thinking,²⁶ creating what literary critic Paul Fussell has described as a vicious, sardonic irony that undermined the status historically associated with military life in Western culture. For officers like Wingate, caught in the Second World War, the Great War loomed as a threat, not just to their lives, but to the historical honors and status associated with their professional struggles. Coalition building became an unexpected battleground over narrative, and officers competed with one another to cast their rivals in the role of out-of-touch 'Great War' style officer threatening to waste the lives of their men in meaningless campaigns.²⁷

disciplinary function" for which he sought a "moral equivalent". William James, "The Moral Equivalent of War," in *William James; the Essential Writings*, ed. Bruce W. Wilshire (1906; 1971).

²⁶ Bourke.

²⁷ Within the competitive interwar military culture, Archibald Wavell earned the strongest reputation, partly through writing wry essays (and even Socratic dialogues) challenging the mistakes of the First World War, and arguing which methods would win the next. The best examples of his writing appear in A.P. Wavell, *The Good Soldier: A Selection of Essays, Lectures and Articles by Field-Marshal Earl Wavell* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1948). B.H. Liddell Hart lionized the 'indirect method' of soldiers like T.E. Lawrence 'of Arabia' and questioned the tactics and strategies of the First World War. B.H. Liddell Hart,

To avoid such a charge, Wingate therefore literally rewrote his campaigns. His infantry brigade in Burma became a 'special force.' To distance himself from the Great War's waste of entire units, he rewrote battalions as 'columns,' and his soldiers as 'Chindits.' In Abyssinia, his soldiers fought as members of 'Gideon Force,' ripping their title straight out of the Old Testament, and straight out of Wingate's own experiences in Palestine. His rival officers, however, pushed back against Wingate's preferred narrative, and with blistering Great War irony labeled Wingate's first mission in Burma as "Operation Longcloth," mocking him as a pseudo Tarzan. After his death, the officer who received command of Wingate's soldiers dismissively referred to Wingate's techniques as "Chindit bullshit," the latter half of the derogatory term a crucial bit of Second World War sneering as soldiers of all ranks jostled for "realness".²⁸ It is the combat over men's memories of the Great War, not just their bodies present in the Second World War, that best explains the development of 'special forces,' as well as the peculiar fact that soldiers spend so much time arguing with one another in 'coalition building' rather than fighting the enemy.

In any event, the Second World War grows more mythic in popular memory with each passing year, but the arguments contained in this study may help to stem the tide of inaccuracy and imprecision. In that spirit, the next section will prod the concepts of 'war' and 'organized

Reputations, Ten Years After (Boston: Little, Brown, and company, 1928). B.H.L. Hart, *"T.E. Lawrence" in Arabia and After* (Greenwood Press, 1935). The competition came to a head during the Second World War, and can be seen with Hart's 1941 offering (re-titled in 1942): Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *Strategy: The Indirect Approach, or the Way to Win Wars* (1941; 1942; 1954). A more scathing example comes from Peter Anthony Thompson, *Lions Led by Donkeys, Showing How Victory in the Great War Was Achieved by Those Who Made the Fewest Mistakes* (London: T.W. Laurie Ltd., 1927).

²⁸ For an explanation of the term 'bullshit' in the Second World War, see Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

violence,' and determine the challenges of studying some of the most frightening phenomena known to our species.

3. THE STUDY OF AGGRESSION, VIOLENCE, AND ORGANIZED VIOLENCE

When thinking about the experience of war and organized violence, it helps to step back and take a wider look at the study of violence, and the variety of observable types of violence that appear in our world. I do not think we can understand Orde Wingate—or his peers—without taking this wider look at violence, and thoughtfully, openly adopting our assumptions about aggressive behavior.

Orde Charles Wingate talked, mated, and fought his way through the sort of military and political problems that Westerners have faced over and over again in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: terrorism, racism, religious conflicts, territorial disputation, nationalism, war, and innovation are all prevalent themes. Wingate died during the Second World War, a war that was the largest and most costly incident of organized violence the world has ever known. The conflict permanently reshaped the world; it shattered empires, vanquished entire nations, and killed millions of people.²⁹ The Second World War was an historical aberration and a unique event.³⁰ But the day-to-day actions, habits, and patterns of the people who lived, fought, and died in that war fit within established behavioral patterns. My research, in a sense, merely describes the processes of organized violence—that is, it describes human beings who cooperate to aggress against a third party. Ostensibly, cooperating partners organize for

²⁹ For an account of the consequences and violence, see Antony Beevor, *The Second World War* (New York: Little, Brown and Co, 2012).

³⁰ Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (New York: Viking, 2011), 193-229.

violence to secure benefits for themselves. Their cooperation results in damages and costs intentionally inflicted against a rival. But the simplicity of the goal misleads us, and it is easy to miss the complexity of the cooperative relationships.³¹ Who will be in charge of the group? How will they identify an enemy? Why do soldiers trust one another? Why do they sometimes fight amongst themselves? How much time do they actually devote to combating the enemy? What do they do with the rest of their time? The search, I argue, must begin by recognizing the need to describe the cooperative relationships that perpetrate violence.

Some writers conflate all violence with war. Thomas Hobbes, for example, described individual human beings as existing in perpetual war with one another unless they consign their rights to a powerful nation-state—and even then they face perpetual war, but one of nations versus nations, which could afford a geographic buffer from immediate peril.³² But by conflating the term 'war' with the violence that occurs between two isolated individuals, Hobbes stretches the term quite far.

Carl von Clausewitz, the first great sociologist of modern violence, suggested there was some merit to thinking of war as "nothing but a duel on an extensive scale." Yet Clausewitz's sharper definitions include "an act of violence to compel our opponent to fulfill our will" and (most famously) "a continuation of politics by other means".³³

³¹ R Harrison Wagner, *War and the State: The Theory of International Politics* (University of Michigan Press, 2010). Tarak Barkawi, "On the Limits of New Foundations: A Commentary on R. Harrison Wagner, War and the State," *International Theory* 2, no. 2 (2010).

³² Thomas Hobbes and Edwin Curley, *Leviathan: With Selected Variants from the Latin Edition of 1668* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1994).

³³ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (London: Everyman, 1832; 1993).

Richard English, building on Clausewitz, draws on more recent strategic and social scientific thinking to define modern war "as heterogeneous, organized, mutual enmity and violence between armed groups on more than a minor scale, carried out with political objectives, possessing socio-political dynamics, and focused on the exerting of power in order to compel opponents[.]" Having described what modern war looks like, English then depicts its time and tendencies: "[modern war] is located in the post-French Revolutionary era of nationalism, during which the interwoven dynamics of national community, struggle, and power have determined a particular form of violent conflict".³⁴ Both Clausewitz and English describe a phenomenon most easily imagined using maps and figures, stacks of military orders and lists of supplies and casualties. But English's inclusion of the word "heterogeneous" at the beginning of his definition indicates the difficulty in crafting a definition for sustained, objective measurement. The Second World War was a war. But English's definition also makes room for terrorist attacks large and small, and almost any behavior that the participants involved think of as a war. Wingate's anti-poaching patrols with the Sudan Defence Force do not seem like a war—the British participants themselves certainly never classified it as such. But the British soldiers who took part in military actions occurring in Palestine from 1936 to 1938 could never agree on what to call 'it;' the British dynamited town squares, hung Arab bandits, and sold black market weapons to both Jews and Arabs. It was certainly violence. And it was usually organized violence, by which I mean that individuals cooperated with one another to inflict harm on other human beings; it might have been war.

³⁴ Richard English, *Modern War: A Very Short Introduction*, vol. 363. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

As many writers have pointed out, animal violence serves a number of *adaptive functions*—that is to say, at points in time, organisms that performed the behavior had a better chance of passing on their genes to a subsequent generation.³⁵ A behavior, even an aggressive behavior, may be considered beneficial for the individual who performs the behavior if it contributes to positive outcomes in one of two categories.³⁶ The first category is 'somatic effort,' which includes the sum of an individual's investment in its own development and maintenance. For an individual in a bureaucratic modern army like Orde Wingate, somatic effort can include events like meals, physical training, financial earnings, and private study. For a volunteer soldier fighting for Islamic State in 2015, somatic effort could include seizing weapons, wealth, power, and status. The second category is 'reproductive effort,' which includes the sum of an individual's investment in mating and parental effort. Again referencing Wingate, 'reproductive effort' obviously includes his marriage, but it also may include time spent developing a relationship with in-laws. The line between somatic and reproductive effort is quite

³⁵ Several writers emphasize the direct connection between war and human evolution. Azar Gat, *War in Human Civilization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Pinker. Bradley A. Thayer, *Darwin and International Relations: On the Evolutionary Origins of War and Ethnic Conflict* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004). John Tooby and Leda Cosmides, "Groups in Mind : The Coalitional Roots of War and Morality," in *Human Morality and Sociality, Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. H. Høgh-Olesen (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010).

For a closer look at the details of the logic that underpins some human violence, see:

David M. Buss, *The Murderer Next Door : Why the Mind Is Designed to Kill* (United States 2005).

³⁶ Daniel J. Kruger and Carey J. Fitzgerald, "Evolutionary Perspectives on Male-Male Competition, Violence, and Homicide," in *The Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Perspectives on Violence, Homicide, and War*, ed. Todd K. Shackelford and Viviana A. Weekes-Shackelford, Oxford Library of Psychology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 162-66.

thin and hard to distinguish. Once an individual stumbles down a particular somatic pathway, certain types of reproductive effort may be closed off forever. In most modern states, there has been a discernible effort to unlink reproductive effort and military aggression, a welcome development that may reduce instances of rape, and mitigate passions associated with sacking cities or defending one's home. The complexity of the 'benefits of waging war' to an individual are why it is so important to study violence and organized violence in specific historical contexts, rather than on strictly abstract terms. But to some extent, scholars have succeeded in drawing in some significant abstract lessons about the precise purpose of aggression and violence.

The anthropologist Melvin Konner provides a particularly brutal listing of functional aggressive behaviors observed in animals (including humans): "competition for mates, food, and other scarce resources; play and exercise; forced sexual intercourse; defense against such forcing; protecting the young; killing the young, either one's own or those of others; competition between groups for territory and other resources; prey killing; and self defense".³⁷ Many of these behaviors do not necessarily result in damage: kittens, puppies, and children can wrestle, bite, and knock each other about without permanent harm. But these same behaviors, delivered with a few more pounds of pressure, can result in damage (and even death) to the participants.³⁸

³⁷ Melvin Konner, *The Tangled Wing: Biological Constraints on the Human Spirit* (Macmillan, 2003), 183-203.

³⁸ The echoes of violence found in play bring to mind Robert Graves' 'The Next War,' wherein he asks children pretending to be Royal Fusiliers "Happy though these hours you spend, / Have they warned you how games end?" Thomas G. Palaima, "Robert Graves's War Poems," in *Irrepressible Adventures with*

Aggressive behavior is functional only in the sense that it often seems tied to particular short-term goals, such as food, survival, domination, or access to mates. Of course, not all aggression succeeds in its short-term goal, overleaping its practical goals and falling into lethal bloodshed. War cemeteries around the world testify that violence often misfires and fails for the individuals involved; while nonlethal violence is the most common form of violence among animals,³⁹ aggressive behavior still leaves many prospective victors in quiet graves. Students of aggression can also differentiate between several categories of violence, each of which is quite different in its observable qualities in animals: prey hunting is different than stalking rivals, and defensive behavior is different than offensive behavior—though human leaders like Wingate often do their best to muddle the line between the two.⁴⁰ There are 'show' threats meant to scare an opponent with false bluster, and there are real threats with deadly seriousness. For the purposes of the present study, the most important division is between organized violence and individual violence. The goal of organized violence—no matter how well organized—seems simple: hurt the 'enemy' and help 'ourselves.'

A few generations ago, ethologists felt that humans take aggression to unusual extremes, and that other animals exhibit greater restraint. Konrad Lorenz, a one-time Nazi and longtime scientist, held the optimistic belief that animal aggression is not intended to kill, but to

Britannia: Personalities, Politics and Culture in Britain ed. Wm. Roger Louis (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013).

³⁹ Hogan M. Sherrow, "Violence across Animals and within Early Hominins," in *The Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Perspectives on Violence, Homicide and War*, ed. Todd K. and Weekes-Shackelford Shackelford, V.A. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁴⁰ Anthony C Lopez, "The Evolutionary Psychology of War: Offense and Defense in the Adapted Mind," *Evolutionary psychology* 15, no. 4 (2017). "Making 'My'problem 'Our'problem: Warfare as Collective Action, and the Role of Leader Manipulation," *The Leadership Quarterly* (2019).

protect geographic territory.⁴¹ Aggression, according to this view, aims to establish resource boundaries between groups. Only when aggression goes awry would the behavior result in the deaths of its participants. Lorenz felt that aggression is natural, and that it builds up inside of an individual and thereafter needs the opportunity for safe release—the idea of pent-up aggression. The early optimism of ethologists like Konrad Lorenz gave way to the recognition that killing takes place intentionally in the animal world—and it happens a lot. Animals and humans do not release pent-up aggression like a safety valve, but instead use aggression and deadly violence for targeted, functional purposes that sometimes prove costly to aggressors. Animals kill not just for prey, but often with the intention of permanently enforcing territorial claims and dominance hierarchies. Deadly violence may even occur between individuals of the same species that face extinction, such as within lion prides or groups of great apes. In the words of Edward O. Wilson, aggression may occasionally twist into abnormality under bizarre conditions, but it "is the total pattern of responses that is adaptive and has been selected for in the course of evolution".⁴² Aggression and violence exists in humans and animals today because it has proved useful to their ancestors.

Writers Azar Gat and Lawrence Freedman, drawing on anthropological research, argue that human organized violence, just like individual violence, proves useful to the individuals involved; organized violence can prove useful because it provides an opportunity to eliminate rivals, prove one's worth within a community, and capture mates or resources.⁴³ When

⁴¹ Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression* (Psychology Press, 2002); *King Solomon's Ring: New Light on Animal Ways* (New York: Crowell, 1952).

⁴² Edward O. Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975).p. 255.

⁴³ Gat. Freedman.

examining Wingate and his peers in detail, and listening more to their words than to the broader Allied narrative of the Second World War, the pattern becomes clear: the purpose of organized violence is often to obtain goods for the individuals involved, and not necessarily for the group as a whole. Konrad Lorenz, swept up in the nationalistic sentiments of the 1940s, missed the fact that the disputation of boundaries is secondary to the benefits of participating in such disputations. Of course, participating in organized violence is risky; the individuals involved therefore often devise clever ways of mitigating personal risk, but still actively competing amongst each other for the rewards of violence. A soldier who has tremendous discipline and a strong penchant for bureaucratic competition can, with careful risk mitigation, emerge among the greatest warriors in his or her society without personally ever firing a shot.⁴⁴

The link between the scientific study of violence and the history of violence is easily ignored: most histories avoid an ordering of humanity's tendencies as a species, and leave most patternmaking to philosophers and scientists. And most of science examines narrow slices of behavior, rather than broad historical episodes. The two disciplines probably fit together better

⁴⁴ The English officers of Wellington's army celebrated the receipt of wounds, but frowned upon taking a leading part in violence. This was a total reversal from the English medieval period, when King Henry V was celebrated for personally cutting down French knights. Orde Wingate appears to have personally never killed anyone; in Abyssinia, he often went unarmed, and in Burma he began carrying a rifle. If he ever used it, his soldiers do not seem to have noticed. Until he was found to have given classified notebooks to his mistress, David Petraeus was widely considered the most cunning warrior of his generation and, being too young for Vietnam, is not known to have fired a shot in combat. John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978). Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble : General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009).

than the present literature indicates.⁴⁵ The art of history provides a durable narrative that helps human beings understand how they arrived to the present day, and the ongoing behaviors which form an intrinsic part of their existence. But the art of history also fulfills a scientific role—it serves as a complex catalog of observed behavior. The more ethically challenging and unrepeatable the behavior, the more essential the observation. History helps science locate the critical questions that must live with indefinite answers.

My research, then, emphasizes the personal development, thought processes, interpersonal relationships, and goals of Orde Wingate, his followers, his peers, and his leaders. Specialists in the study of organized violence and war will find clues to some of the most complex and mystifying events of the Second World War, and answers to technical questions about the relationship between coalition building and the use of instrumental violence. Readers looking for an adventure story will find one, because my biographical approach (as opposed to a more abstract assessment of individual behavior) strives to find the details that can paint a humane and empathetic understanding of human action, human achievement, and human failure amid one of the most terrible epochs our species has ever known. I hope that both casual readers and specialists will be intrigued with my efforts, and that my approach spurs increasing use of biography as a method for studying violence.

⁴⁵ Academic political science often stands apart from the crucible of policy making, and as a discipline it has particularly eschewed biography. This is an odd exclusion since the durability of biography and memoir among practitioners and the public suggests that they intuit a usefulness in the form that is missing from other types of analysis. An important and carefully argued exception was a political scientist's recent study of American strategy specialist Brent Scowcroft. Bartholomew Sparrow, "Why Would a Political Scientist Write a Biography?," *Perspectives on politics* 14, no. 4 (2016). Bartholomew H. Sparrow, *The Strategist : Brent Scowcroft and the Call of National Security* (2015).

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2. “These are the bites of their lair brothers”

Men on average have greater height and weight, more upper-body strength, higher metabolic rates, higher juvenile mortality, and later sexual maturity than women (for a review, see Miller, 1998).⁴⁶ Such attributes are related to competition for resources, social status, and mates,⁴⁷ competition that can be hazardous, violent, and sometimes fatal.

Kruger and Fitzgerald (2012).⁴⁸

The preceding epigraph, taken from an essay in the *Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Perspectives on Violence, Homicide, and War*,⁴⁹ speaks to part of the reason why young men like Wingate were unquestionably channeled towards careers in the British Army as they passed

⁴⁶ Geoffrey F Miller, "How Mate Choice Shaped Human Nature: A Review of Sexual Selection and Human Evolution," *Handbook of evolutionary psychology: Ideas, issues, and applications* (1998).

⁴⁷ Margo Wilson and Martin Daly, "Competitiveness, Risk Taking, and Violence: The Young Male Syndrome," *Ethology and sociobiology* 6, no. 1 (1985).

⁴⁸ Kruger and Fitzgerald.

⁴⁹ Todd K. Shackelford and Viviana A. Weekes-Shackelford, *The Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Perspectives on Violence, Homicide, and War* (New York Oxford University Press, 2012).

from childhood to adulthood, and it broadly reflects a few of the educational steps of Orde Wingate's life as a young British male: his parents sending him from India to England; their placing him at a prestigious public school rife with interpersonal violence; Wingate's attendance at a state-sanctioned military academy; and the intense competition and bullying that Wingate faced each step of the way. The competition did not begin full swing, however, until he reached adolescence. The nonconformist Christian sect to which his parents belonged—the Plymouth Brethren—were nervous about the temptations of wider English society, but at no time did Wingate's parents try to extract their children from that society. Instead, they sought to find their offspring competitive places within it.

Orde Wingate's early life provides insight into the sort of childhood that leads to a career in the British Army of the early 20th century, an army that was a unique coalition organized for violence, and one that enabled its members to obtain personal rewards (security and status and sex) while striving for unobtainable higher causes (civilization and justice and Pax Britannica). Orde Wingate's early life traces the patterns of reinforcement, modeling, stress, life experience, and physical development that helped shape his later behavior. The following chapter traces almost the exact same story as Christopher Sykes in Wingate's official biography.⁵⁰ Yet where Sykes lifted rocks and found small and crawling strangeness, I lift the same rocks and find that it is, for the most part, just the same earth on which the rest of us live. The constant themes in Orde Wingate's family history were not religious fundamentalism and unorthodoxy, but religious

⁵⁰ The papers found in the Imperial War Museum's Orde Charles Wingate collection were originally collated for his benefit. The collection will hereafter be referred to as OCW, IWM. The bulk of my narrative comes from Sykes' interviews and research and therefore I cite him throughout, rather than feigning to dig a trench where one had already been dug.

change, and an economic and social life inextricably tied to various forms of service in the British Empire.

1. FATHER

Born in 1852, George Wingate entered the British army through the purchase system, whereby gentlemen were expected to pay for their commission into the officer corps.⁵¹ The officer could thereafter receive promotion partly through commendation, and partly through additional payment—a reflection of the high demand for a limited supply of offices.⁵² The purchase system of promotion also ensured that an officer's social rank stood roughly equivalent to his military rank; an officer could later prove his fitness for that rank through the discipline of his soldiers and his own composure under fire.⁵³ For the cost of £450, George Wingate was commissioned in the Green Howards, an infantry regiment with roots reaching back to 1688, and that recruited its enlisted personnel out of Yorkshire. George Wingate's views of the purchase system are unknown, but it was already highly controversial by the time he was commissioned and would soon be abolished as "antagonistic and incompatible" to professional qualification.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Sykes.

⁵² Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, "The Development of Professionalism in the Victorian Army," *Armed Forces & Society* 1, no. 4 (1975); Edward M Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army, 1868-1902* (Manchester University Press, 1992). Arvel B Erickson, "Abolition of Purchase in the British Army," *The Journal of Military History* 23 (1959).

⁵³ Keegan, 193.

⁵⁴ Charles Edward Trevelyan, *The Purchase System in the British Army* (Longmans, Green, and Company, 1867), 1.

Though the son of a reverend, the young George Wingate must have found little satisfaction in his father's own religious beliefs, for he absconded from the Church of Scotland for the puritanical discipline of a Christian sect called the Plymouth Brethren. Sykes holds that the deep, multi-hued spirituality of India "impelled" George Wingate to the trials of Protestant fundamentalism.⁵⁵ And yet many young soldiers managed to serve in India without any such change. According to Sykes, George Wingate demonstrated his faith in many ways. He once joined an Indian mystic in a 'trial by fire' in a wordless attempt to convince the mystic that Christians could also endure extreme discomfort. And, while on campaign, he forced his soldiers to rest on the Sabbath, thus causing his unit to arrive late for a designated rendezvous with his commander. He nevertheless earned a mention in despatches (an important British Army method of awarding recognition) showing that his general behavior still accorded with the expectations of his profession.⁵⁶

In Orde Wingate's files at the Imperial War Museum, few documents reference his father. One of the extant relics is an *Elementary Course: Field and Permanent Fortification, and of the Attack of Fortresses* by Captain G. Phillips, Royal Military College Sandhurst, and published in 1866.⁵⁷ It is a technical manual remarkable for its uninspiring dullness, and reflective of the drudgery and mechanical advances of the Crimean War of ten years prior.⁵⁸ The archives also include George Wingate's own contribution to the technical literature, a

⁵⁵ Sykes.p. 23.

⁵⁶ Ibid.p. 24.

⁵⁷ G Phillips, *Elementary Course: Field and Permanent Fortification, and the Attack of Fortresses* (London: Royal Military College, Sandhurst, 1866). OCW, Box 1. IWM.

⁵⁸ Marshall J Bastable, "From Breechloaders to Monster Guns: Sir William Armstrong and the Invention of Modern Artillery, 1854-1880," *Technology and Culture* 33, no. 2 (1992).

manual entitled "Report on Grass Operations, Western Circle, 1888-89," wherein George Wingate received credit for assisting Lt. Colonel R. Patch in discovering the availability and needs of forage for the Punjab and Baluchistan regions of the empire in India. In some ways, Orde Wingate's greatest inheritance from his father was a military heritage shaped by Victorian scientific thinking—an almost religious belief that war was reducible into fundamental principles.⁵⁹

George Wingate, though well-suited to his career as a professional soldier, was sexually and spiritually adrift. Like many of his peers, he lacked the means and opportunity to marry; financial difficulties, the same strain that drove him to India as a soldier, also blocked marriage. The religious position of his father suggests that the typical avenues of sexual relief--flings, sex trafficking, or romantic love--were unlikely, if not impossible. As Ronald Hyam argues, "Leisure [in the Indian Army] was really a choice between lying idly on a barrack bunk, perhaps for eighteen hours a day (for going out in the sun or masturbating were both believed to drive one mad), drinking oneself silly in the canteen, or going to a prostitute (and risking the clap)".⁶⁰ The puritanical George Wingate had few easy options in the 1870s, but his admittance into the Plymouth Brethren solved George Wingate's problems in an unusual way. Shortly after joining the sect, he set his sights on a captain's daughter, Ethel Orde-Browne--also of the Plymouth Brethren.

⁵⁹ Ian FW Beckett, "Victorians at War—War, Technology and Change," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 81, no. 328 (2003).

⁶⁰ Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1991).p. 122.

2. MOTHER

The fact that Ethel Orde-Browne was only twelve years-old at the time of their meeting does not necessarily indicate that George Wingate had a tendency towards the sexualization of children. He seems to have placed his marital hopes into the future where they could not so immediately meet disappointment. Placing sexual fulfillment in the future also allowed him many years of self-justified celibacy. They married in 1899. He was forty-six years old, and a colonel; she was thirty-two. Interestingly, Ethel Orde-Browne was missing one eye, and as a consequence she posed for photographs, even group portraits, facing to the right so as to hide the eyeball's absence from the camera.⁶¹

Ethel was the eldest daughter of Captain Charles Orde-Browne, and the granddaughter of Colonel Browne, a man little remembered except as the owner a mansion in Gloucestershire called Stout's Hill.⁶² When Colonel Browne died his eldest son (Ethel's father) fell into his inheritance at only sixteen years of age. Through his father, Charles Orde-Browne belonged to the Victorian class still known as 'country gentry,' the sort that provided most of Britain's military officers since the time of the Napoleonic wars, and only stopped fulfilling that role when the casualties and demands of the First World War destroyed their customary monopoly on the

⁶¹ It seems impossible to find a photograph of Ethel Wingate in which she is looking straight at the camera, and this would seem to support the idea that she was missing an eye. But an important qualification is that the story comes from an entertaining and often fictionalized account: John Krivine, *A Green Rose: The Memoir of Lorna Paterson* (Charleston: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 44.

⁶² Sykes, 24. Nicholas Mander, *Country Houses of the Cotswolds* (London: Aurum, 2008).

prestigious commissions.⁶³ Charles Orde-Browne obtained his military commission at sixteen, and almost immediately deployed to the Crimean peninsula. The young man soon abandoned the Church of England for the stern, evocative spiritualism of the Plymouth Brethren, much to the chagrin of his family.⁶⁴ He resigned his commission at the end of the Crimean War. He moved to North Woolwich, a suburb of London that was also home to the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. It was in this suburb of London that Charles Orde-Browne would meet George Wingate, who would marry Charles' daughter, Ethel, some years later.⁶⁵ He brought her back to India, where in 1903, the year that Orde Wingate was born, a Reverend E.J. Hardy explained that "'wife and children are a kind of discipline' in the tropics",⁶⁶ an idea that George Wingate, as a nonconformist, echoed in his own behavior as a call to be a strict and even violent disciplinarian with his small children.

⁶³Archibald Percival Wavell Earl of Wavell, *Allenby, a Study in Greatness: The Biography of Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby of Megiddo and Felixstowe G.C.B. G.C.M.G* (Bombay G.G. Harrap & Co, 1940), 35.

Keegan, 224. Christopher B Otley, "The Social Origins of British Army Officers," *The Sociological Review* 18, no. 2 (1970).

⁶⁴ In the view of certain Anglican ministers, the Brethren in the mid 1800s caused much consternation as they attacked the practices of the Church of England. The ministers often felt compelled to go on the offensive, lest the Brethren's "bold assertion sometimes be mistaken for truth". As an example: *Heretical Doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren*, (London: Benjamin L. Green, 1852). Edward G. Carr, *The Tenets of the Plymouth Brethren Examined* (London: R. Baldwin, 1864).

⁶⁵ Sykes, 24.

⁶⁶ David M Pomfret, *Youth and Empire: Trans-Colonial Childhoods in British and French Asia* (Stanford University Press, 2015), 27.

3. GROWING UP A WINGATE

The conventional story of Major-General Orde Charles Wingate begins with the trauma of his birth in India on 26 February 1903. The delivery occurred at Naini Tal, a town planted in the foothills of the Himalayas; it was the traditional summer residence for the officers and officials of the United Provinces. The circumstances of his birth immediately made him a product of the British empire, so much so that from the age of two hours to the age of twenty years his prospects for an education and for a career did not change whatsoever. As the temperatures climbed in that summer of 1903, the Wingate's left Naini Tal for six months of earned leave. Their destination was England, in the London suburb of Blackheath. There they could rely on constant help from the Orde-Browne grandparents. In early 1904, Ethel and George returned to India, but they left their children behind at II Paragon, the Regency-era home that belonged to the Orde-Brownes.⁶⁷ Ethel Wingate, after barely surviving Orde's delivery in 1903, went on to give birth to four more children by the year 1911.⁶⁸

Orde Wingate's sister, Sybil Wingate, helps make some headway into understanding the family's life upon resettling in England—and she paints it in various pastoral images, evoking an English landscape wherein the empire beckons as a duty and a threat.⁶⁹ Sybil wrote a number of defenses of her brother after his death, including one for the *Spectator* in 1959 in response to the recently published biographies of Sykes and Mosley, both of which cast her family in a

⁶⁷ Trevor Royle, *Orde Wingate: Irregular Soldier* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995), 14.

⁶⁸ George Wingate, "Letter Concerning Birth and Hemorrhage " in *MG Orde Charles Wingate*, ed. Imperial War Museum (Imperial War Museum 1903).

⁶⁹ Pomfret.

strange, uncertain light.⁷⁰ The following excerpts, however, come from a letter found at the O.C. Wingate collection at the Imperial War Museum; it was probably written as a contribution towards Sykes' official biography of her brother.⁷¹ It represents not just their childhood, but an attempt on Sibyl's part to shape her brother's legacy. Sibyl was a complicated, interesting, and highly educated woman who turned to socialism at a young age, and as a young woman she visited the front lines during the Spanish Civil War—in fact seeing modern combat before her brother, the professional soldier.⁷² As a young adult she introduced her brother to the writings of Karl Marx and George Bernard Shaw, and then to various Labour leaders who could help advance his career.⁷³ Wingate was never a professed Fabian, but when he later talked about world government, or the just and unjust impulses of British imperialism, he would use terms that Sibyl helped him discover. He developed a taste for language that echoed Shavian epigrams, and the prolix pragmatics of *Major Barbara*. His use of the Old Testament (contrary to Shelford Bidwell's interpretation) tended towards the rhetorical and ironic rather than Christian zealotry. On the first Chindit campaign, for example, he radioed a passage from Genesis in order to lure a group of his own soldiers into serving as a decoy.⁷⁴ And on the

⁷⁰ Sybil Wingate, "Orde Wingate and His Critics," *The Spectator*, 28 May 1959. Leonard Mosley, *Gideon Goes to War* (New York: Scribner, 1955).

⁷¹ Sybil Wingate, "Letter from Sybil Wingate to Unknown," in *OCW*, ed. Imperial War Museum (Imperial War Museum, 1959).

⁷² Richard Gott, "Britain Divided: The Effect of the Spanish Civil War on British Political Opinion," (JSTOR, 1964).

⁷³ Paterson. Digital file 3, 31:25.

⁷⁴ Sykes, 417. "Remember Lot's wife. Return not whence ye came. Seek salvation in the mountains. Genesis XIX." See also: Michael Snape, *God and the British Soldier: Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars* (Routledge, 2007), 73, 76-77. Snape focuses on Douglass Haig and Bernard

second campaign in 1944, he discovered that he would have to improvise a plan around fortifying improvised airfields, and so he told his soldiers to "Get ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope".⁷⁵ As for their childhood, Lorna Paterson, Orde Wingate's widow, admired the floods of warmth that she knew her husband experienced, but she also warned her son, Jonathan Orde, that his father's siblings could be vicious. The first night she spent in the house of her in-laws, she was still a teenager and only recently attached to Orde Wingate. Here is how she described the event in her extraordinary audio memoir:

Colonel Wingate said a prayer for me: 'This little lost lamb,' he called me, and I was rather touched. But it was lucky for me that I was not a lamb. I may have been a Mowgli, perhaps, thrown in amongst them. And it amused them, and rather pleased them to see the way (rather than shrinking back as some of their guests did) I burrowed my way into the heap. But of course, wolf children, if they survive and are found again, always carry scars on their arms and legs. These are the bites of their lair brothers. And I was not quite unscarred....⁷⁶

Paterson describes an exhilarating and sometimes explosive scene of intense sibling rivalry over ideas, religion, literature, and action. Yet the remarkable aspect of the Sibyl Wingate's letters

Montgomery, but in a few spare pages argues that Wingate's use of Bible is also "demonstratively religious." But it was Montgomery, not Wingate, who in his memoirs spoke of the importance of accessing "a proper sense of religious truth" in order to "inspire armies." Bernard Law Montgomery, *The Memoirs of Montgomery of Alamein* (Cleveland: World, 1958).

⁷⁵ Bidwell quotes fabulist Anthony Simonds to determine that Wingate was once "writhing on his bed in agony, praying, and [I] could do nothing to help him." Bidwell, 38, 39-44. Simonds is the only source to insist that Wingate retained the fundamentalist feeling that his father had picked up (and he had discarded) in his twenties. By the time he was in Burma, Wingate found Plato "most soothing". Rolo, 110.

⁷⁶ Paterson. Digital file 17, 23:40.

concerning her childhood with Orde is the earnest strain to cast their childhood in the tones often associated with Victorian and Edwardian notions of childhood innocence, and a love of medieval romance,⁷⁷ such as when they gathered to listen to an aunt's fairy stories, which was "in itself pure delight to any child."

Unlike Grimm's and Hans Anderson's tales, which we also devoured at this age, the stories invented by Mother and the aunts were based on a fundamentally optimistic outlook, and an unspoken faith in the essential goodness of the universe, which were excellent for children⁷⁸

Sibyl wanted to bring attention to the fact that her brother experienced more than a 'wrath of an angry God' childhood, even though many of his peers had assumed that his ties to Zionism and struggles with depression were rooted in fears of a jealous, all-powerful deity. In fact, they were more likely rooted to his sister's opening of his mind to Marxist thinking, something that one of his commanders would later complain about in the Sudan, and which, in fact, Wingate himself complained about, occasionally writing intensely felt letters about how hunting opened his soul to noble privilege in the face of the coming proletariat revolution.⁷⁹ Even today many casual observers presume his beliefs as a Christian fundamentalist, usually because they weigh the views of Wingate's male rivals or siblings more than the women who knew him best. Sybil seems to have played the strongest role in crafting the narrative of her younger brother's early life, and she pushed Sykes to emphasize the family's hiking trips to ruined castles and the sites

⁷⁷ Velma Bourgeois Richmond, *Chivalric Stories as Children's Literature: Edwardian Retellings in Words and Pictures* (McFarland, 2014).

⁷⁸ Autobiographical letter from Sibyl Wingate. OCW, Box 1, Folder 1/3/7/21. IWM.

⁷⁹ Royle, 41-42.

of medieval battles. The trips, she wrote, led them to invent Brontë-like worlds of kings, queens, and great battles to be played out over weeks, months, and years.

Fire and brimstone, love and fidelity, revolution or conservatism, sentimental antiquarian or technological innovator, parental resentments and parental attachments, prayerfulness and agnosticism. Mosley looked for (and therefore found) a fanatic.⁸⁰ Sykes wrote about everything but saw only half it, and declared Wingate puzzling (rather than interesting) and strange (rather than eccentric). Royle wrote about everything, and in the balance of the facts declared Wingate a moderate. Wingate was neither a fanatic nor a moderate: he was simply another malleable young mind, and tethered to the rigors of a childhood bent towards adulthood using tasks almost solely aimed at encouraging competition and rivalry within one's immediate peer group.⁸¹ The leading public intellectuals of the day searched for "a vision for a rapidly changing world" though it was a world that was in fact far more stable than the rest of Europe or, indeed, the world.⁸² Wingate would later position himself as what American journalists would describe as a 'freedom fighter', by which he usually meant an advocacy for a nationalist project associated with his campaigns. The slightly elder Sibyl seems to have pushed Wingate in such a way as to ensure that he took politics more seriously than their parents, whom she viewed as apolitical with conservative instincts.

At this age we were much preoccupied with the idea of justice and injustice. We used to read avidly an English version which Mother possessed of some of the Socratic

⁸⁰ Leonard Mosely, *Gideon Goes to War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955).

⁸¹ James D Roff, "Childhood Aggression, Peer Status, and Social Class as Predictors of Delinquency," *Psychological reports* 70, no. 1 (1992).

⁸² R. Overy, *The Twilight Years: The Paradox of Britain between the Wars* (Penguin Publishing Group, 2010).

Dialogues, entitled "The Trial and Death of Socrates," and Ordey and I once had a long, though inconclusive argument on the theme "Is holiness holy because the Gods love it, or do the Gods love it because it is holy?" Ordey at this time was, I should say, nine and I ten years old. I am surprised to remember now that Ordey plumped for God's righteousness, if there had to be a choice, and I for his omnipotence. That is, I said that if there was a law above God to which He must conform, then God was not God. Whereas Ordey maintained that, if good and evil were so only by a sort of Divine whim, then God was not inherently righteous but a sort of Almighty Devil. I don't, of course, mean that we used those words at that age, but we knew what we were talking of, all the same. It was this attitude, I suppose, which led him at a later date to tell me that (like the greater prophets of the Old Testament) he thought that the need for justice was the strongest argument for personal immortality. As he put it then, "There must be a future life, or there would not be justice for Rink." (Rink being a fellow Carthusian whom Ordey believed to be the victim of great injustice).⁸³

Sybil 'plumped' for God's omnipotence during her childhood, but here she is also making a case for her brother's rationality, and using a story from their mutual childhood to defend his reputation and memory from accusations of Christian zealotry while in uniform. In her understanding of Orde Wingate's early views, the imperfections of earthly justice required the existence of a heaven and hell for the meting out of a true justice that transcends the world's imperfections. This is, in Sybil's view, tamer than believing that God metes out justice in the active world among us. Sybil does not see her brother as a self-proclaimed Christian soldier, but someone who is capable of imagining the basic goodness of the universe.

⁸³ A Carthusian is a member or student of Charterhouse, Orde's day school. Autobiographical letter from Sibyl Wingate. OCW, Box 1, Folder 1/3/7/21. IWM.

Sybil's letter emphasizes moments of happiness and the driving curiosity in Orde Wingate's early life. But Sybil also remembered the children felt a deep-seated fear of their father, with whom there was an "impenetrable wall of reserve and estrangement".⁸⁴ Lorna Paterson remembers her father-in-law as elderly, but still strong "mentally and physically." George Wingate "was quite polite and kind to me. But he was obviously not very interested in Orde, and he was remote".⁸⁵ He used to beat little Ordey so severely at the dinner table that his sister Monica would excuse herself from the table in order to cry.⁸⁶ All the children learned to memorize large tracts of the Bible, and they would receive an inscribed copy of the book from their stern father upon reaching whatever standard he had imagined for them.⁸⁷ One of Wingate's later biographers, Trevor Royle, argued that the severity of the father and the blunt task-mastery required of the children did not differ so much from many of the school programs of pre-war England.⁸⁸ He is right that the commonalities are stronger than the differences.

The severity of George Wingate did not prevent the intellectual independence of his children. Orde Wingate's struggles with his father's religion began early in life. His religious upbringing would soon chaff against his (comparatively) liberal education at Charterhouse and the Royal Military Academy. Sibyl Wingate suggests that most of her siblings eventually abandoned the faith of their parents, but that they retained a sense of mission. In John Krivine's fictionalized account of Orde Wingate's life, he imagines Orde's three surviving sisters

⁸⁴ John Bierman and Colin Smith, *Fire in the Night: Wingate of Burma, Ethiopia, and Zion* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 11.

⁸⁵ Paterson. Digital file 12. 11:45.

⁸⁶ Ibid. Digital file 12, 7:25.

⁸⁷ Royle, 21.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

as women who would have “thrown themselves under a passenger train in pursuit of a given purpose”.⁸⁹ There is no evidence that they ever took their passions quite that far. Sybil Wingate, in any event, did become a left-wing activist and ardent supporter of socialism; she was close enough to British Labour to introduce Orde to the eventual Labour leader Michael Foot when her brother returned from Palestine in 1939.⁹⁰ More intensely, Sybil Wingate went to Barcelona to support the Republican government in 1937.⁹¹ She first volunteered as a secretary for John McNair and the Independent Labour Party in Barcelona.⁹² A few weeks later, she informed McNair that she would be leaving his office to serve as a nurse along the frontlines. The Spanish then instituted a policy to uphold traditional gender roles, and John McNair was forced to go to the front to persuade Sybil to withdraw to Barcelona.⁹³ She later became one of the founding members of the Labour Spain Committee, and vociferously excoriated the Labour party for its lack of engagement with the Spanish Republican movement.⁹⁴ Sybil’s first experience of war and politics therefore predated that of her brother despite the latter’s career as a professional soldier.

⁸⁹ Krivine, 51.

⁹⁰ Bierman and Smith, 136-37.

⁹¹ Krivine, 50; C. Fleay and M. L. Sanders, "The Labour Spain Committee: Labour Party Policy and the Spanish Civil War," *The Historical Journal* 28, no. 1 (1985).

⁹² Angela Jackson, *British Women and the Spanish Civil War*, vol. 5 (New York: Routledge, 2002), 107-08.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ K. W. Watkins, *Britain Divided; the Effect of the Spanish Civil War on British Political Opinion* (London, New York: T. Nelson, 1963), 194.

Roseanna Webster, "A Spanish Housewife Is Your Next Door Neighbour": British Women and the Spanish Civil War," *Gender & History* 27, no. 2 (2015): 287-88.

4. CHARTERHOUSE

As Orde Wingate aged into adolescence, his parents took steps to ensure their offspring's place in a wider society. To this end they uprooted the family and moved to a large house in Godalming, a small market-town with roots in the wool industry, and within easy reach of London by rail.⁹⁵ This location placed them down the road from Charterhouse, an English public school oriented towards education of its pupils—and the assuagement of parental fears of social decline.⁹⁶ The Wingate parents, however, feared that the Anglican atmosphere of Charterhouse might spoil Orde's fundamentalist religious habits, and so they sent him to the school as a 'day boy' rather than as a resident student. In any event, Orde was not perfectly-equipped for such a conformist environment as Charterhouse but it had less to do with the religion he soon shrugged off than his relatively cheap clothes, and his wearing of dress boots rather than shoes.⁹⁷ It was also true that he disliked Charterhouse's organized sports and ball games (an almost unpatriotic attitude at the time), perhaps because they clashed with his siblings' amusements of role-playing, fantasy, and an actual education.⁹⁸ Sykes' 1956 official biography of Wingate can hardly contain the writer's fury at his long-deceased subject. The

⁹⁵ Royle, 23-25.

⁹⁶ William Whyte, "Building a Public School Community 1860–1910," *History of Education* 32, no. 6 (2003).

⁹⁷ Orde's wealthy mother-in-law had a penchant for remembering Orde's stories in which money could have been a solution. Alice Ivy Hay, *There Was a Man of Genius: Letters to My Grandson, Orde Jonathan Wingate* (London: Neville Spearman Ltd, 1963).

⁹⁸ Colin Veitch, "'Play Up! Play Up! And Win the War!' Football, the Nation and the First World War 1914–15," *Journal of Contemporary History* 20, no. 3 (1985); Timothy P O'Hanlon, "School Sports as Social Training: The Case of Athletics and the Crisis of World War I," *Journal of sport history* 9, no. 1 (1982).

dead man “won no prize and distinguished himself in no branch of study or athletics”, and that he preferred hiding in the chapel to “wholesome” activities like cricket or football,⁹⁹ which meant that Wingate was an “irritating little boy” who was “wretchedly unhappy” but Sykes knew that it was just “irrational misery” even though no one “can at all remember [Wingate] as he then was”.¹⁰⁰ Sykes entirely ignored the fact that the “inexplicably unhappy” day boy would have remained within reach of his abusive father each night and every morning.

The purpose of Wingate’s attendance had less to do with any particular curriculum, and more about competition, class identity and solidarity, and access to a military commission.¹⁰¹ There is no record of the Wingate parents or their many children raising a concern about the ongoing First World War. It may have even been viewed as a cost-saving benefit, as students who passed through Charterhouse from 1914 to 1918 could graduate and immediately enter the ranks of the British officer corps . The idea was that officers had to be gentlemen, and that gentlemen came from a short list of recognized public or grammar schools.¹⁰² The consuming casualty rates of the Great War enabled a rushed admittance process into the profession of arms, and Orde Wingate’s parents had aimed their son at this from a very young age; regardless of whether or not his parents rationalized it, it was a fact that Orde Wingate was the eldest son of three boys and four sisters. He grew up anticipating the Great War, but by the

⁹⁹ James Anthony Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Psychology Press, 2000).

¹⁰⁰ Hay. Sykes, 34-37.

¹⁰¹ James A Mangan, "Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England," in *'Manufactured' masculinity* (Routledge, 2014).

¹⁰² Keegan, 224. Ian Worthington, "Socialization, Militarization and Officer Recruiting: The Development of the Officers Training Corps," *The Journal of Military History* 43, no. 2 (1979).

time he finished at Charterhouse the war was over, and immediate acceptance as an officer was not possible. Instead, George Wingate applied to the government for tuition remittance for Orde's attendance at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich on account of his advanced age and many children; he received it. Most of the Wingate biographers inexplicably ignore the way that the daily grind of Charterhouse was in and of itself a preparation for the competitive, hierarchical life within the military; they only see Orde Wingate, the eccentric radical who wore boots and cheap clothes to school, and did not know how to play cricket.

5. ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY AT WOOLWICH

Orde Wingate, like his father, was 'destined' to become an officer. No other career seems to have been considered. Wingate's father was an officer, as was his grandfather on his mother's side. So strict, meaningful, and enduring are the divisions between enlisted men and officers that it is possible that no Wingate since the years of the Norman conquest had ever served in the enlisted ranks as a private soldier.¹⁰³

And so, on a day with an anvil overcast in January, 1921, Orde Wingate entered through the East Gate of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich to become an army officer.¹⁰⁴ The academy, popularly referred to as the Shop, was located on grounds southeast of London. There are still a few military installations in the vicinity, but the Shop itself shuttered its gates at the beginning of the Second World War. It stood vacant for many years. Its brick facing and

¹⁰³ The Wingates (pronounced WIN'get) believed their name to be an anglicized form of the French 'Winguet'. Sykes, 21. Gary Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-Man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War* (Springer, 2000).

¹⁰⁴ Tulloch.

curious past eventually encouraged a new interpretation, and now the old academy consists of chic apartments and condominium units. The structures are made of red and tawny bricks, with concrete window frames. Wind gauges sit atop the metal onion tops of the main building. Local cricket players gather on the Shop's front lawn to engage in one of the 'ball games' that Wingate never enjoyed. The academy had produced officers trained in engineering and artillery, while its still standing cousin, the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, formerly supplied the needs of the more posh infantry and cavalry regiments. Wingate's father aimed his son at Woolwich, partly due to its proximity to the family, but mainly due to its relative affordability compared with Sandhurst.¹⁰⁵

Derek Tulloch, who entered Woolwich with Wingate on the same day, recorded his impressions of the academy in the book he published in 1972 to memorialize his lost friend. The bleak buildings of Woolwich presented little liveliness to the incoming 'Gentlemen Cadets.' The cadets lived three or four to a room. The academy furnished each room with stiff chairs, truckle beds, wash basins, and lockers. The rooms lacked carpeting and curtains. Each day was arranged in a tight schedule. The instructors attempted to make the academic aspects of the program directly applicable to military training, so that the coursework interpreted physics, chemistry, and history through the prism of military thought and action. Chemistry classes examined the consistency of explosives and smokeless powder. Geography described imperial holdings in Africa, India, and Australia. Math and physics included calculus, dynamics, and mechanisms.

For whatever reason, French was an exception to the rule of earnest application to military science, and French, Tulloch remembered, "was not taken very seriously." In a clear instance of conformity, Wingate also despised French; his instructor, one Mr. H.G. Chambers,

¹⁰⁵ Sykes, 37.

labeled Wingate's work "very bad indeed." Wingate retaliated in his French notebook with a series of horse sketches. Horse sketches, in fact, trample through all of Wingate's notebooks, and occasionally a horse kicks the skull of a cartoon obese man--possibly the French instructor.¹⁰⁶

Every military academy, borrowing from the rituals of the English public schools, has its own peculiar rituals of initiation, and it seems that the less relevant an individual's status is outside of the academy, the crueller an individual might be in holding onto its own chits of privilege, while insisting that it is ensuring progress among its youngest cadets.¹⁰⁷ If a Woolwich cadet slid through the program without any trouble he might graduate after a two-year period chopped into four 'terms.' The school received a new term of cadets every six months. The senior term of cadets attempted to maintain discipline among the student body. Derek Tulloch perceived no bullying at the Shop, but he did admit that "there were two customs or traditions that had been handed down the years, one of which was pretty uncivilised while the other could be classed as perilously near brutality".¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ G. H. A. White, "Hunting Notes for Beginners," in *O.C.W.*, ed. Imperial War Museum (Woolwich: Royal Artillery Institution Printing House, 1919).

¹⁰⁷ Joseph S Groah, "Treatment of Fourth Class Midshipmen: Hazing and Its Impact on Academic and Military Performance; and Psychological and Physical Health," (NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL MONTEREY CA, 2005). Jana L Pershing, "Men and Women's Experiences with Hazing in a Male-Dominated Elite Military Institution," *Men and Masculinities* 8, no. 4 (2006); Arturo Manzanedo, "The Persistence of Hazing in the Military," (Marine Corps Command and Staff Coll Quantico VA, 2013).

¹⁰⁸ Tulloch, 14.

The cadets called the first ritual "The Snooker Dance".¹⁰⁹ Each Friday, the snookers (or first-term cadets) gathered outside the Shop's gymnasium. As a uniform, they wore their white flannel cricket outfit and a gym vest (a skimpy sleeveless shirt). The snookers then paraded into the gym as if at a formal dance, while the other cadets and the shop officers awaited them in their best uniforms--no women were allowed to attend. The evening then alternated between formal dance and coerced antics. During the intervals of dance, the Royal Artillery Band struck up a dance number while every snooker scrambled to find a partner. Should a snooker fail to find a partner, he had to latch onto another pair so that all three cadets then had to dance together. In between the dance intervals the senior term cadets herded the snookers together and forced them to perform idiotic stunts.

In Tulloch's account, he cannot bring himself to actually describe what sort of antics the snookers engaged in, but he does state that the activities were severe and stupid enough to lead to broken wrists and broken ankles. After an evening of dance and antics, the senior term waited outside the gym with cans of water "and other unpleasant items".¹¹⁰ The snookers then rushed into the dark night and met what fate they might at the hands of the senior term. For resourceful snookers, there was an odd way out of this final disaster: "The passport to immunity from this treatment" Tulloch reports, "was to produce a bowler hat, or a portion of a bowler hat." Why a bowler hat served as protection is not known. For a snooker, passing from the first to second term was the most durable amulet of all, and provided immediate exemption from this weekly humiliation.

¹⁰⁹ The author of the history of 'The Shop' helplessly includes the modifier "great feature" for every inanity he describes. Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, *"The Shop": The Story of the Royal Military Academy* (London: Cassell, limited, 1900), 203. "great feature" 203

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

The Snooker Dance enabled the senior term to harass the snookers. In a cloistered environment without women, war, or money, the Snooker Dance presented an opportunity for status, and a caricatured form of manhood. Woolwich was not alone in its rituals.¹¹¹ Most academies of the period featured similar stunts, though each had its own peculiar character. What is special about Woolwich is the particular figures who ostensibly paraded in white flannel—Herbert Kitchener¹¹², Archibald Montgomery-Massingberd¹¹³, Arthur Lee¹¹⁴, and many more. Did Farouk of Egypt or Napoleon IV receive the same treatment? ¹¹⁵ In a society in which the richest rewards came very late in life, the cheap reward of no longer having to dance as a snooker seems to have proved valuable as a marker of status and a ritual of bonding.

There is no record of what Wingate thought of the Snooker Dance. But his reaction to 'running'—a brutal disciplinary ritual—is well remembered because during Wingate's two and a half years at the Shop, he was the only cadet punished with a 'run.' Running, unlike the Snooker Dance, was directly connected with the attempts of the Senior Term to enforce discipline. It was requested and administered by cadets, with only a nod of approval from the actual officers that staffed the Shop.

¹¹¹ Aldo Cimino, "The Evolution of Hazing: Motivational Mechanisms and the Abuse of Newcomers," *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 11, no. 3-4 (2011); Maurice Garnier, "Technology, Organizational Culture and Recruitment in the British Military Academy," *JPMS: Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 3, no. 2 (1975). Judy L Van Raalte et al., "The Relationship between Hazing and Team Cohesion," *Journal of Sport Behavior* 30, no. 4 (2007).

¹¹² Soldier, Secretary of State for War during First World War (b.1850-d.1916).

¹¹³ Soldier, Chief of the Imperial General Staff from 1933-1936, (b.1871-d.1947).

¹¹⁴ Soldier, member of parliament, diplomat, and member of the House of Lords (b.1868-d.1947).

¹¹⁵ Last King of Egypt and the Sudan (b.1920-d.1965). Son of Napoleon III, served British Army in Africa and died fighting the Zulus (b.1856-d.1879).

Wingate largely ignored his studies, avoided organized religion, and disliked sports. He was 'run' due to his one enjoyment: horse riding. The hobby offered a few moments of escape from the rest of Woolwich. Due to a sick-drop, Wingate fell six months behind his peers at the Shop; thus, when those cadets he entered the Shop with reached their fourth and final term, Wingate had only reached his third. He nevertheless won 'spurs' for riding proficiency, which accorded him the privilege of voluntary riding periods.¹¹⁶ But the Shop rules indicated that the cadets who wanted to ride horses should, in their few free hours, first form a parade prior to bicycling to the stables as a group. Wingate made a habit of ignoring this rule. Instead he skipped the formation and headed directly to the stables.¹¹⁷ There he could choose a horse, mount, and ride off before the other cadets could reach the stables. The other cadets--the ones who followed the rule--complained about this to the cadet known as the 'Senior Under.' The professional staff at the academy held the Senior Under responsible for enforcing discipline among his fellow cadets. For this particular term, Tulloch records the Senior Under's name as Whitman. Like Tulloch, Whitman entered the academy at the same time as Wingate, but now outranked him by a term. Whitman threatened Wingate that he would be harshly disciplined (be 'run') if he violated the rule again. Wingate promptly broke the rule.¹¹⁸

Whitman, furious and frustrated and already unpopular with his peers, determined to run Wingate as a show of force. Whitman first obtained the assent of the Shop adjutant, as per custom. Whitman failed, however, to obtain the agreement of Wingate's own term. This would eventually prove to be a tactical error, as it violated one of the norms of the academy. According to Tulloch, the ceremony of running traditionally existed as a way of "indicating that

¹¹⁶ Tulloch, 23.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 24.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 24.

the cadet's own term considered him guilty of disgraceful conduct But in this case Wingate's own term were not aware of the decision to run him until after the event was over, and obviously neither Whitman nor Wingate took any steps to let them know".¹¹⁹ After bypassing this step, Whitman next ordered Wingate to present himself on the rugger ground at 8pm, after mess dinner. Whitman then summoned the senior term to that same field, all armed with swagger canes, and forming two lines that made a channel towards a water tank. Whitman ordered Wingate to strip naked. Wingate obeyed. The next expectation was that Wingate would run through the gauntlet of the senior term while receiving blows from the swagger canes, and then get tossed into a water tank. But instead of running, Wingate took a slow march down the line, staring the senior term in the face and "daring them to beat him." Startled and uncertain and not quite comprehending the reason Wingate was receiving punishment, the senior term stood motionless but for a few isolated strokes. Finally, at the end of the line, Wingate calmly stepped into the water tank on his own accord.¹²⁰

Tulloch and the rest of the senior term quietly fell away, embarrassed and uncertain. Word of the 'running' soon spread throughout the academy. When the cadets of Wingate's own term received the news, they were furious. Frederick Wintle, a future Colonel, recalled for Tulloch that the junior term (himself included) took personal offense, and then ran riot against the anonymous (and probably innocent) member of the senior term that they all assumed was responsible for Wingate's troubles. The junior term filled the older cadet's bed with coal and soaked it with water. The signal soon came for 'Lights Out.' Tempers had calmed down by following morning.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 25-26.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 25.

¹²¹ Ibid., 26.

The Commandant of the academy, General Sir Webb Gillman, spoke with Wingate shortly after the running. He found Wingate courageous, but immature. He remonstrated against Wingate's habits, and launched Wingate on a trajectory of self-improvement, encouraging him to make up for his blown opportunities at education.¹²² Yet the institutions of the academy did not solely encourage the sort of education openly proscribed by the commandant. The system of demerits, the openly posted class rankings, the quasi military promotions, and the student-enforced discipline all encouraged extreme levels of competition among peers. They reflected skills necessary for succeeding within an aggressive bureaucratic system. Orde Wingate's experiences with peer conflict and competition were intentional outcomes of his education, rather than aberrational sideshows, and they helped to socialize Wingate and his fellow cadets into the British Army and the British Empire.

Wingate entered the senior term quietly, and received a commission in the Royal Artillery. He began reading seriously again. Wingate's peers described him in his Woolwich years as unhappy, odd, anti-social, mixed-up, bloody minded, untidy, a poor example, rebellious, and irreligious. Tulloch, the man who became Wingate's best friend, suggests that Wingate "left, after two and a half years, a happy, well-balanced young man, eager to tackle the next stage of his career".¹²³ The academy, at any rate, had sharpened and 'balanced' Wingate for the narrow competition expected among British officers.

6. BROADER ACADEMY CULTURE

Wingate's life at Woolwich can be better understood by examining military academy life more broadly--and even by crossing the Atlantic and examining the educational priorities at the

¹²² Tulloch, pp. 26-27.

¹²³ Ibid, p. 27.

United States Military Academy at West Point. In a study of West Point, Joseph Ellis and Robert Moore described the purpose of a military academy as to socialize a cadet such that they focus only on fixable, attainable problems that can be broken down into component parts and solved with diligence and careful task management.¹²⁴ An academy also tries to socialize a soldier to behave as if always on top of their work, even if they are not. "But the difficulty for a military man is that, having mastered the ability of appearing to be on top of the problem, he is very reluctant to set his legerdemain skills aside and admit he doesn't understand the problem," thus defeating the obvious usefulness of breaking a problem into smaller, more manageable pieces in the first place.¹²⁵ Wingate's training prepared him and his peers to compete with one another in presenting 'the mask of command,' a phrase which often translates into an officer offering the illusionary presentation of perfectly understanding the situation in front of them. The competition then, becomes for perfect understanding of the military problem in front of them; failing that (and they must always fail such a high standard), they must compete at the presentational aspect. Additional cultural norms at the academy help enable a shallow emphasis on war; Ellis and Moore, for example, also found one U.S. Army officer who described his service thusly: "We in the military are simply the bullet in the gun, and the gun is the whole American society and the trigger is pulled by the President and Congress. So *they fire us*. They decide what we are to hit. We don't worry about the target and we don't pretend we're heroes A high degree of professionalism means you don't question your target and you send the heroes to the rear".¹²⁶ Wingate would eventually become famous for doing exactly the

¹²⁴ Joseph J. Ellis and R. Laurence Moore, *School for Soldiers: West Point and the Profession of Arms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

¹²⁵ Ibid., 152.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 162-163.

opposite: questioning the target and deciding what to hit in Palestine, Abyssinia, and Burma. After the socializing rigors of Woolwich, Wingate's creeping political idealism could only alter his own shot at certain moments, but when it did occur, it would sometimes strike with tremendous timing and spectacular aim. In the desperate hours of the Second World War, Wingate's political instincts, which only disrupted his career during more peaceful moments, aided him in the competition among his brother officers for prestigious opportunities, as he argued that he could leverage minimal resources for maximal strategic gain—a hubris that required a precise political logic in order to persuade the senior leadership. But long before he ever demonstrated a tendency for unusual political engagement, he passed through a time in his career in which his behavior was fairly uniform to the other young officers around him. More often than not, Wingate blended in. He was not an uncanny madman, but a young officer competing alongside other young men for scarce promotions, and scarce opportunities for honor.

The next chapter will examine Orde Wingate's unusual marriage to Lorna Paterson, and draw on a newly recovered source to tell Wingate's story from her perspective.

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3. "I only ask that my evidence be taken into account"

Lorna Wingate, Orde Wingate, and status and sex among soldiers and survivors of the Second World War

"Who is going to believe the widow?" So asks Lorna Moncrieff (née Paterson) Wingate Smith in her audio memoir.¹²⁷ It is the outstanding (and completely overlooked) source on the life of her late husband, Major-General Orde Charles Wingate. Orde Wingate was one of the most of controversial British soldiers of the 20th century. His short life and long military career, 1903 to 1944, led writers of all sorts to create a rich and contentious library about Wingate and the irregular military units he created and commanded in Palestine, Ethiopia, and Burma.¹²⁸ Lorna's intimate and vivid audio memoirs address several subjects of interest that pertain to the Second World War, Orde Wingate, and the sunset period of the British Empire. The following

¹²⁷ Lorna Paterson, 1974, Digital file 5, 37:00. Lorna Paterson's daughter, Lucy Catling, née Smith, possesses the digital files containing Lorna Paterson's audio memoir. Paterson. She gave the author permission to copy the files, and make use of them for the purpose of academic writing. Mrs. Catling has indicated a desire to transfer the files to the Imperial War Museum in London. In the meantime, public access to some of the materials on the tapes is through a self-published (and fictionalized) volume by Krivine.

¹²⁸ There are many vigorously contemptuous accounts of Wingate, including: Bidwell. Hugh Boustead, *Wind of the Morning: The Autobiography of Hugh Boustead* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1972), 138, 41-44, 49-53. S. Woodburn Kirby, *The Decisive Battles* vol. 3, *The War against Japan* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1961). And Slim. For examples of heated counter-assessments, see Peter Mead, *Orde Wingate and the Historians* (Devon: Merlin Books Ltd., 1987). And David Rooney, *Wingate and the Chindits: Redressing the Balance* (London: Arms and Armour, 1994). Bidwell and Mead also sustained an argument through the *Journal of Contemporary History*. Peter Mead and Shelford Bidwell, "Orde Wingate - Two Views," *Journal of Contemporary History* 15, no. 3 (1980).

chapter introduces a provocative new source on Wingate, and is likely to fundamentally alter the narrative of his character and private life. More broadly, it challenges conventional military history's myopic focus on war-fighters rather than war-families with a look at the interplay between the dynamics of status and sex.

Wingate's widow, Lorna,¹²⁹ created her account in 1973 and 1974 as a direct response to the many contrary assessments of her late husband.¹³⁰ She places a particular emphasis on the relationship she shared with him, and his behavior throughout their marriage. Her account consists of almost seventeen hours of audio recordings placed on analog tape over a two year period, and now preserved on twenty-three digital files; there is some evidence that she recorded even more material, but that it either has been lost or destroyed. The tapes explicitly state that she created the recordings in direct response to the publication of Derek Tulloch's *Wingate in Peace and War*.¹³¹ In the recordings, she persistently addresses herself to her son Orde Jonathan Wingate.¹³² And she doggedly attacks the writing of Derek Tulloch, as well as that of Christopher Sykes (Wingate's official biographer), and a host of other commentators. Lorna claims that she places her son Jonathan's interests and feelings foremost as she creates the tapes; this might have led to romanticism, but instead comes across as a harsh rebuttal to Wingate's large cadre of biographers, friends, enemies, and former lovers, many of whom (in her view) polished an unnecessary shine onto his story, or else traduced him. Doing so required

¹²⁹ The following paper refers to the creator of the audio memoir as Lorna to avoid the confusing her with her marital partners: she was born 'Paterson,' married 'Wingate,' and then married 'Smith.' Sykes and Royle refer to her as 'Lorna,' and the present paper follows those imperfect models.

¹³⁰ On Paterson., Digital file 19, 43:06, Lorna tracks the time: "This is track one, side one, of tape seven, dearest. [...] I want to pay a tribute to this machine. It's been going on now for a year and a half, perhaps rather more, and it's done splendid service. [...] It's January the 3rd, 1974."

¹³¹ Tulloch.

¹³² Jonathan Orde Wingate (1944—2000), born shortly after his father's transport plane crashed into a remote hillside in the jungles of Burma.

Lorna to expose previously unknown aspects of their relationship, and reveal new information that has been left out of the substantial historiography on Wingate.

Postmodern Wingate

The chief characteristic of accounts about Wingate is their contested nature.¹³³ The basic facts can be agreed upon, chief among them that Orde Wingate was born in 1903, was raised in a radical Christian sect called the Plymouth Brethren, unhappily attended Charterhouse as a 'day boy,' joined the British Army after a difficult schooling at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, served as an artillery officer on Salisbury Plain in the aftermath of the First World War, joined the Sudan Defence Force in 1928, broke off an engagement to a woman named Peggy Jelley, married a teenager named Lorna Paterson, failed to secure a position in the Staff College, obtained a staff posting to Palestine, discovered within himself Zionist sympathies, created and led mixed Jewish-British forces against Arab bandits, received his first DSO,¹³⁴ nearly derailed his career with pro-Zionist political lobbying in London, deployed to Cairo, obtained command of a unit designed to restore the Emperor of Abyssinia to his throne, received a bar to his DSO, attempted suicide, returned to London, deployed to Burma, penetrated behind Japanese lines with a few thousand British soldiers, returned to British lines with a substantially degraded force, received a second bar to his DSO, returned to London, accompanied Winston Churchill to the Quebec Conference, argued for and received a larger

¹³³ The Orde Wingate papers in the Imperial War Museum (London) provide the basic sequence of Wingate's life, and include, besides his military reports and school papers, the recollections of his family and friends. Most of the material regarding Wingate's time in Palestine was shipped to Steve Forbes' Churchill collection in New York, but it is also available on microfilm at the British Library. Sykes' papers are in the Georgetown University Booth Center for Special Collections, but it is thin on material relating to Orde Wingate.

¹³⁴ Distinguished Service Order.

command, deployed several thousand more British soldiers behind Japanese lines, and then died in a plane crash.

It is an extraordinary story. The personal narrative is dramatic, even stripped of the military narrative; and the military narrative is dramatic, stripped of the personal narrative. The interest in both narratives has led storytellers—mainly military historians, journalists, and ex-soldiers—to grasp at the scraps of facts as a starting point for a multitude of stories and arguments which contradict one another, and prevent a clear picture of Wingate as a human being.

Wingate engaged and inspired the imaginative faculties of others, and many of the people he came in contact with lacked either the interest or the discipline to rein in their imaginations. Exaggeration accompanies many of his adventures. Biographer Leonard Mosley invented a plan in which Wingate wanted to blow up British facilities in Haifa in support of the Jewish cause.¹³⁵ The official biographer, Christopher Sykes, turned hot and cool towards his subject, and as a consequence his book, despite its thoroughness, alternates between passages of fanciful romance and heedless gossip.¹³⁶

The Second World War was better recorded than any other major conflict up to that time, and yet the conflicting accounts mean that Wingate's actions can, at best, only be ascertained with assiduous and painstaking research. The best of this research comes from Simon Anglim, a military historian, who provides a careful analysis of Wingate's campaigns, and Wingate's use of the British military's small-wars 'doctrine' in planning and executing his

¹³⁵ Mosely. According to Wingate enthusiast John Krivine, Mosely's imagination was probably encouraged (and sent astray) by Wingate's friend, fellow Zionist, fellow intelligence officer (and subordinate in Abyssinia), Anthony Simonds. All of the Jewish Haganah members present at the meeting where this plan was supposedly discussed have refuted Mosely's book; Sykes and Anglim both concluded that the supposed plan was a fiction.

¹³⁶ Sykes.

missions.¹³⁷ Still, the behavior and attitudes of those involved remain muddy. Confusion is a natural extension of guerrilla and unorthodox warfare and the haphazard organization of the units involved; most participants in the conflict could not be entirely sure about where they were in the battle-scape, what their immediate task was, or what was happening next. Side conversations and scuttlebutt abound. They are repeated as often as the official reports, and are sometimes more accurate. The limitations of technology, such as incomplete maps and the absence of satellite positioning systems, compound the problem. Contradictory arguments exist, and they are not going to be settled: Wingate was an indispensable genius, he was worthless and derivative, he was strong and courageous, he was a slight man and a moral coward, he was incorruptible, he was a freedom fighter, he was an extension of colonialism.¹³⁸ All of these perspectives have merit to them. His early death robbed history of a backwards-looking autobiography that could have clarified his intentions and filled in the gaps, or at least allowed him to participate in a running argument with his contemporaries who survived the war and told his story for him.

Of the rival perspectives, the most illuminating is that of his widow, Lorna Paterson, though she too could not resist leaving a variety of competing narratives about her husband. When he was alive, as might be expected from someone fulfilling the role of a soldier's wife, she participated in the press's idealization of her husband, and romanticized their first meeting. Later she put a harsher edge on the encounter; she developed an increasing awareness of the peculiarities of their courtship, and its implications for his polarized reputation. Her

¹³⁷ Anglim.

¹³⁸ Wilfred Burchett, a Marxist journalist, created the clearest image of Wingate as a freedom fighter. Anglim finds that any reading of Burchett's journalism "must be done with care" due to his defection to (and propaganda for) North Korea, North Vietnam, and perhaps even the KGB. Ibid., 6-7. Wilfred G. Burchett, *Wingate's Phantom Army* (Bombay: Thacker, 1944).

disappointment with the Sykes biography, combined with her marriage to John Smith in 1954, led her to avoid further direct interactions with journalists and historians, such that by 1999 (nine years after his death) Bierman and Smith were comfortable stating that in the latter years of her life she tended to drive people off “with a shotgun” and “had a problem with bottles”.¹³⁹ She was, by the time of her death, dismissive and dismissed, but her audio memoir reveals a more complicated picture of status, relationships, physical danger, and a sense of fair play.

SEX AND MATES

In the biographies of Mosley, Sykes, Royle, Tulloch, and Alice Ivy Hays, the sexual morality of Orde Wingate comes across as a vein of Victorian bourgeois prudery, with little interest in women beyond fidelity to his mother and his surviving sisters. In his early years as an army officer, he stumbles into an almost accidental (and innocent) five or six-year engagement to Enid Margaret “Peggy” Jelley. As the narrative continues, Peggy Jelley breaks off the engagement due to pangs of the heart after Wingate suddenly falls in love with the young Lorna Paterson aboard a steamship crossing the Mediterranean.¹⁴⁰ Mosely, the least reliable of the writers, goes so far as to argue that “[Wingate’s] inhibitions where women were concerned were fundamental [...] He was afraid of women, for what, as his mother warned, they might do

¹³⁹ Bierman and Smith, 390-91. Lorna states on the tapes that the threat of a shotgun was a bluff—she didn’t believe she had one on the premises.

¹⁴⁰ Sykes, 87-88. Lorna makes a point throughout the audio memoir to denigrate Sykes’ tendency to throw in odd and unsubstantiated stories. Lorna felt that Sykes made her husband less human, and more of a cartoon. Lorna viewed her deceased husband as a consistent and ruthless egoist; Sykes viewed him as an inconsistent ditherer with sudden bursts of clarity and enthusiasm.

Rolo.

Tulloch.

to him".¹⁴¹ In telling such a story, the writers attempt to make Wingate apiece with famous British military celibates like T.E. Lawrence and Charles Gordon.¹⁴²

Lorna Paterson's testimony on the tapes drastically alters the story of Wingate's sexuality, and destroys the romanticized veil thrown around their courtship. Lorna Paterson carried a copy of *Wuthering Heights*, rather than a prayer book, up to the altar on their wedding day, and it is in that Brontë vein that the Wingates can best be viewed as a couple: self-absorbed and passionate, they were both leaders who used the Bible more as an instrument of imaginative power rather than as a rulebook that might restrict their own actions.

First Engagement

Orde Wingate met Peggy Jelley, his soon-to-be fiancé of five years (or six years—the start of the engagement was informal), in 1927 while stationed at Fareham.¹⁴³ He was a subaltern and only recently commissioned. The Jelley family lived in a nearby home in what Wingate's future wife denigrated as "rather straitened circumstances".¹⁴⁴ Lorna Paterson, relaying the story that Wingate told her immediately after breaking off the engagement, argues that Wingate had originally intended to "make a pass" at Peggy's sister, Mary Jelley, who had "the most beautiful legs" but was discovered (again according to Paterson) to be "a lesbian"

¹⁴¹ Mosley, 33.

¹⁴² 'Lawrence of Arabia' and 'General Gordon of Khartoum.'

¹⁴³ Tulloch, 35.

¹⁴⁴ Lorna Paterson, audio tape memoir, digital file 2. There is a streak of what might be dismissed as gossip throughout Lorna's narrative. But so-called gossip, though not always verifiable, is intrinsic to human behavior, and to the extent that it casts a light on the broader patterns of decision-making it is interesting and pertinent.

Sarah R Wert and Peter Salovey, "A Social Comparison Account of Gossip," *Review of General Psychology* 8, no. 2 (2004).

and in a relationship with the wife of a naval officer.¹⁴⁵ And so Wingate shifted his focus to Peggy. At a dance, they kissed each other passionately. The kiss promoted Peggy to naively announce that they were engaged, and Wingate, not knowing what else to do, naively went along with it. Tulloch, with a great deal more circumspection than Lorna, simply states that "In due course they became unofficially engaged",¹⁴⁶ and Peggy Jelley's sister, Mary, later wrote in tortuous terms that between Orde and Peggy, there was "intimacy that should not have been unless marriage was to follow".¹⁴⁷ In the exchange, Wingate and Peggy obtained access to premarital sex, and they could live vicariously through one another while the former explored Europe, the Near East, and the Sudan, and the latter remained rooted in pastoral England.

Wingate's career provided a barrier to marriage in two ways. First, his subsequent assignment in the Sudan lasted five years, and though, due to the climate, British officers in the Sudan Defence Force were permitted to go on leave during the summer, the distance provided a physical and emotional obstacle to closer union with Peggy. Second, the British Army would not provide any accommodations for an officer to have a spouse until turning thirty years-old. In the accounts of Sykes, Tulloch, and Royle, these are the main obstacles to Wingate's marriage to Peggy, though Sykes also describes Wingate's concern that Peggy was too gentle, reminded him of his mother, and therefore would fail to push him into the challenges he imagined might come his way.¹⁴⁸ In cruder terms, Wingate saw the marriage as domestic and tame, and perhaps boring and not especially high status.

¹⁴⁵ Lorna shares this detail to demonstrate to her son that "she hadn't forgotten anything" about the story. It shows Orde and Lorna's delicious instinct for story-telling, regardless of whether or not it is true. Royle states that "To begin with it was Peggy's older sister Mary who was most attracted by him and his sudden enthusiasms: 'I thought him such a strange young man, half humorous, half morose.' Royle, 43.

¹⁴⁶ Tulloch, 35.

¹⁴⁷ Royle, 81. Letter from Mary Jelley to Derek Tulloch.

¹⁴⁸ Sykes, 86-88.

Lorna Paterson Meets Wingate

Nevertheless, Sykes states that "By 1934 it was agreed that the marriage [to Peggy Jelley] should not be postponed longer".¹⁴⁹ Most versions of the story remark that it was an unfortunate coincidence that Wingate met Lorna Paterson just before he was to be married to Peggy Jelley. Only Lorna Paterson's version explains the timing. According to Lorna's recorded tapes, Peggy Jelley had, at some point prior to his final trip to the Sudan, promised the unhappily engaged Wingate that if he fell in love with someone else, then she would release him from their engagement.¹⁵⁰ Wingate, in other words, was looking for a way out of getting married to Jelley, and the only way out was by meeting another woman—or even a lonely adolescent. Just before his desert explorations, Wingate duly booked himself a return voyage on the *Strathnaver*,¹⁵¹ the largest ocean liner on the P&O fleet "because there was more room for girls onboard".¹⁵² Wingate obviously had hopes of falling in love on his way back to England. Before executing the return journey, he celebrated the end of his time in the Sudan with an unsuccessful search for the Oasis of Zerzura. It was his first serious attempt at winning fame. He did not find the oasis, but when he got out of the desert he did find that the P&O could not put him on the *Strathnaver*, and he instead was to board the *Cathay*, a much smaller ship. He later told Lorna that he took the smaller ship as a sign from God that he would have to marry

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Lorna Paterson, audio memoir, digital file 2, 36:15.

¹⁵¹ Royle (pg 79) states that the ship was the *Viceroy of India*. Lorna Paterson states that it was the *Strathnaver*. In either case, the ship was larger than the *Cathay*.

¹⁵² Lorna Paterson, audio memoir, digital file 2, 38:35.

Peggy.¹⁵³ But before the vessel could complete its crossing of the Mediterranean and dock in Marseille, Wingate stumbled into the affections of a sixteen year-old girl, Lorna Paterson.

The tone of their first encounter varies widely, usually due to the varied interpretations given by Lorna herself. In an account that Lorna told to the American journalist Charles J. Rolo in 1943, she described their meeting as “a kind of joint commando agreement,” thereby drawing a direct line between the style of warfare for which Wingate became famous and the tactics the new couple used to ditch his fiancé and overpower her parents.¹⁵⁴ After the publication of the Sykes biography, Lorna wrote a short, unpublished memoir that is usually referred to as the Edinburgh Manuscript.¹⁵⁵ On the basis of the manuscript, Royle asserts that “Later in life, Lorna would always maintain that it was love at first sight: ‘I marched up to him and said, you’re the man I’m going to marry, we both felt the same way about it’”.¹⁵⁶

Lorna’s most detailed account, however, is recorded on the tapes.¹⁵⁷ It also rings the truest. It is notable for its frankness, and for the aching adolescence that created the moment. She was returning with her parents from Australia. It had not been a happy journey. The family of three had sailed south in a failed attempt to reach Lorna’s ailing maternal grandmother, Alice Elizabeth Wigmore, before she died in August of 1933.¹⁵⁸ A frantic and fractious hunt for the

¹⁵³ Mary E. Jelley, "Letter to TIs Regarding Christopher Sykes Biography of O.C. Wingate," in *The Times Literary Supplement* (London, England: The Times Literary Supplement Limited, 1959).

Loran Paterson, audio memoir, digital file 2.

¹⁵⁴ Rolo, 16.

¹⁵⁵ A few pages of the Edinburgh Manuscript survive in the Orde Wingate files at the Imperial War Museum, but most seem to have been lost—or possibly destroyed in the bonfire Lorna used to annihilate much of her wartime memorabilia.

¹⁵⁶ Royle.

¹⁵⁷ The story is found on digital file 2.

¹⁵⁸ "Probate Notification Regarding the Death of Alice Elizabeth Wigmore," *West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954)*, 09 January 1933 1933.

will ensued, with Lorna's mother, Alice Ivy (a trained musician and a philanthropist) castigating the widower Herbert John Wigmore for reasons the young Lorna could not understand.¹⁵⁹ In addition to these intergenerational troubles, the relationship between Lorna's own parents was itself fast-fraying, with her mother having only recently (and unwillingly) exited a years-long extramarital affair.¹⁶⁰ Lorna's parents continued to cooperate and cohabitate, but Lorna relates that her mother told her that she would deny Walter 'conjugal rights' for most of their marriage. Alice Ivy, Lorna states, was "straight out of Strindberg: she loved attention, and hated sex".¹⁶¹ The coolness of her parents' relationship later shaped the unorthodox character of Lorna and Orde's marriage.

The young Lorna was left to her own devices throughout the journey across the Mediterranean aboard the P&O *HMS Cathay*. Her mother played bridge. Her father "solaced himself in the bar".¹⁶² Lorna was lonely, bored, and had just turned sixteen. She first saw Orde Wingate as he "prowled" up the ship's gangplank in Alexandria. Wingate instantly struck her imagination, and she determined that she was in love with him "at first sight." Ironically, she failed to see him again for some days because she had poor eyesight and, like many young people, refused to wear eyeglasses. Eventually, with the help of a friendly retired general, she

¹⁵⁹ Alice Ivy was born Alice Ivy Wigmore (1895—1982). She married Walter Edward Moncrieff Paterson, a managing director of the East Indies Company, in 1916. G.C. Bolton and 'Wigmore Andrew Morant, Alice Ivy (1895–1982)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wigmore-alice-ivy-15800/text26999>, published first in hardcopy 2012, accessed online 20 January 2020. , "Wigmore, Alice Ivy (1895–1982)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography Australian National University 2012).

¹⁶⁰ Lorna Paterson, digital file 2, 20:00.

¹⁶¹ Lorna Paterson, digital file 12. August Strindberg is the Swedish playwright most famous (in the English-speaking world) for his play *Miss Julie*, in which a lust, once consummated, culminates in suicide.

¹⁶² Lorna Paterson, digital file 2, 24:30.

discovered Wingate in the ship's library, where he was reading Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*.

Lorna sat down beside him, desperately nervous, and pretended to read for several awful minutes. Finally, with her stomach in knots, she managed to turn to him and ask, "Do you come from Egypt or Arabia?" Wingate turned to her, put down his book and replied, "I come from the Sudan." Lorna, having already conditioned herself to fall in love with a stranger, did not find it difficult to fall in love with Orde Wingate on account of his china blue eyes, his exotic soldiering, his reading habits, his soulful conversation, and even his unusual name. Lorna does not recall what they talked about—but she does remember Orde making a point of meeting her parents. Alice Ivy later reports discussing the prospect of marriage between the two, and she said that Lorna was much too young, but that she had been told by a fortune teller that she would marry a soldier, and that—who knows—it might turn out to be him.¹⁶³

All this was enough to plan another meeting with Lorna's family in London at the Brown's Hotel on Dover Street.¹⁶⁴ But first, in Paris, he jumped off the train and sent a telegram to Peggy Jelley. He told his fiancé not to meet him at the station, where she and Lorna (or Lorna's parents) might meet. After disembarking in London, Wingate vanished from Lorna's sight for a few days, and then reunited, as promised, at the Paterson's hotel. He took Lorna aside and, according to her audio memoir, he told the sixteen year-old everything that had transpired between him and Peggy: how a friend had lent them a London flat for their reunion just a few nights prior, how Wingate demanded that Peggy keep her word and release him from the engagement, how Peggy persuaded him to come out to Farhem and tell her family that he was breaking off the engagement, how the family implored him not to break it off so close to

¹⁶³ Alice Ivy Hays of Seaton, *There was a Man of Genius* (1963). The story also appears in Sykes and Royle.

¹⁶⁴ Digital file 2, 31:00.

the wedding, how the relationship had gone on for years, and been intimate, but that Wingate had never quite loved Peggy as much as she loved him, and, finally, how Peggy, as they parted forever, determined to keep his revolver, his cufflinks, and their car. Lorna ends the story of the breakup by contrasting her response to hearing the story with his attitude in telling it.

I may say that I was—I was—frozen with horror at all this. I felt guilty you see. I was really almost beside myself with misery. I don't think he noticed this because he was still rather shocked himself by what he had to go through. It takes great courage to jilt a woman at the altar steps when you've known her for six years.¹⁶⁵

Lorna's shock was that of a young woman having stumbled into a complicated affair bound to change the complexion of their hitherto brief relationship. His attitude was a little more indulgent.

The manner in which he told me this tale was an extraordinary mixture. Not at all the sort of thing that would seem to tally with Peggy's account. [...] But he was torn, when he was talking to me, he was torn between pity and compassion, very genuine compassion, horror, over what he had been through, and his 'narrow escape,' as he said, and a kind of brutal laughter[...]¹⁶⁶

This is not the account described in any of the biographies of Wingate. Christopher Sykes' 1959 official biography went furthest in prettying-up the end of Wingate's engagement with Peggy Jelley,¹⁶⁷ a result likely accounted for by Sykes' dependence upon Jelley for access to Wingate's letters, as well as Lorna Paterson's tendency—prior to the publication of the Sykes biography—to protect her husband's reputation. The Sykes account of the breakup has Jelley and Wingate arrange to meet, not in a private room, but outside the Army and Navy club in Pall

¹⁶⁵ Lorna Paterson, audio tape memoir. Digital File 2, 39:59.

¹⁶⁶ Lorna Paterson, audio tape memoir, digital file 2, 42:20.

¹⁶⁷ Sykes, pg. 87-88.

Mall.¹⁶⁸ Peggy controls the conversation with her fiancé, and elicits a confession from him that he has fallen in love. Peggy states plainly and immediately that they must break off the engagement. Peggy still meets with Wingate several more times over the following months, and finally Wingate agrees to put an end to the engagement—and only then at the prompting of his mother. Sykes' account underlines Wingate's hesitancy and perplexity, thereby meshing with Mosely's portrait of Wingate as being uncomfortable and uncertain with women due to his Christian faith. Derek Tulloch and Trevor Royle both fail to either reaffirm Sykes' story or to cut a new path, though Tulloch does step closer to the truth by noting the Jelley family's resentment of Wingate after the breaking off of the engagement. The Lorna Paterson audio memoir provides a clarity and precision absent in the other accounts.

Lorna recorded her darker version of the story in direct response to Derek Tulloch's publishing of his book, *Wingate in Peace and War*, in 1972. In order to capture the more intimate aspects of Wingate's character, Tulloch had included within his book a long letter from Peggy Jelley in which she described her relationship with Wingate. After she explained her anger at Tulloch, Lorna recorded in her audio memoir:

Now, I have every sympathy with Peggy. I think she had a dreadful experience. It ruined her life. And she's waited a long time for her comeback. Nearly forty years. Derek has waited a quarter of a century to get his knife in.¹⁶⁹

As the excerpt above suggests, Lorna was not pleased with Tulloch's depiction of her marriage with Wingate. Though Tulloch had applauded Lorna's intelligence, eccentric taste in pets, and warmth to his own family, Lorna noticed denigrating details that would escape the casual reader. Tulloch described Lorna's conversations with Wingate as "constant arguments," rather

¹⁶⁸ Bierman and Smith (1999) closely paraphrase Sykes' account, pg 48.

¹⁶⁹ Lorna Paterson, audio tape memoir, digital file 2, 4:28.

than discussions. He invented animals (loaded with symbolism) that neither she nor Wingate ever owned.¹⁷⁰ Most importantly, Tulloch had invited Peggy, and not Lorna, to provide “a card of entry into [Wingate’s] character. It might be quite interesting to use me as another card of entry into his character”.¹⁷¹ The tapes make clear, repeatedly, that Lorna took umbrage at Tulloch’s exclusion of her view, and at the aspersion that her absence from the book throws on her relationship with her late husband. It limits her public appearance to that of a sporadic helpmate, at best, or at worst, a sharpening stone for Wingate’s belligerence. Lorna’s intention to defend herself is clear. But Lorna goes on into a more particular vein, one that gets to the heart of Orde Wingate’s character, behavior, and consequent reputation.

And they’ve managed, between [Peggy and Derek], to evolve a theory—a sort of myth—which I foresee is going to be discussed. The myth is that your father was not the man he’s been described as by both friends and enemies—that is to say, a man of force and fire and ruthlessness—occasional ruthlessness—and tremendous argumentative ability, and various qualities which some people like more than others like, for instance, aggressiveness, and uncompromising-ness. The story now is going to be that he was very different [in his youth], [and] that he had this shape thrust upon him by the wife that was a major influence in his life.¹⁷²

Though Lorna remained committed to Wingate’s memory as a brilliant military officer and Zionist, she also (in the tapes) seemed to loathe attempts to sanitize his character. It was clear, some thirty years after her husband’s death, that her version of the ‘Wingate myth’ had found no purchase, and so instead of attempting once more to delicately polish Wingate’s image she

¹⁷⁰ Tulloch, 40-43.

¹⁷¹ Lorna Paterson, audio tape memoir, digital file 3, 4:30.

¹⁷² Lorna Paterson, audio tape memoir, digital file 2, 6:30.

would (literally) toss every self-aggrandizing bit of memorabilia into a bonfire,¹⁷³ and offer as much of a confession as she could bear to Wingate's only son.¹⁷⁴ She also did not want their only son, Jonathan Orde Wingate, to view her as a malicious and negative force in their lives.

I don't want you, darling boy, to think that you are the offspring of a long, fierce argument.¹⁷⁵ [...] What I'm saddened by is that [Derek] wants to present me as the abrasive creature who roughened your father's surface so that he became unacceptable to so many people.¹⁷⁶

Jonathan Orde Wingate was not the offspring of a violent argument, but he did represent an exceptional change of course for the marriage between Orde Wingate and Lorna Paterson.

REPRODUCTIVE EFFORT

Prior to the Second World War, the Wingates had decided not to have children. The choice was Lorna's, though Wingate, she recorded, assented as a way for his young wife to retain her independence.¹⁷⁷ Birth control methods were rudimentary. Lorna's wealth afforded her access to an abortionist.

I had two abortions. One about six months after I married, and one about three years after. I make no excuse for this and I bitterly regret it. I did not want any children—until

¹⁷³ Digital file 2, 12:15.

¹⁷⁴ Lorna also had two young children from her second marriage, both of whom lived with her at the time of the recording, and are discussed in digital file 23.

¹⁷⁵ Lorna Paterson, audio tape memoir, digital file 2, 7:30

¹⁷⁶ Digital file 2, 9:47.

¹⁷⁷ Much to the chagrin of his friends, Wingates also did not worry about having "meals prepared" and other domestic arrangements. Simonds, 2.

the war broke out, or just before it, when I came to my senses, realized that he might be killed, and tried thereafter to have a baby.¹⁷⁸

The first abortion would have occurred while Wingate was assigned to Camp Bulford, Salisbury Plain. The second coincided with Wingate's assignment to Palestine. Lorna had followed her husband to Palestine and set up a home for them in a small apartment in Jerusalem in 1936.¹⁷⁹ Early in 1938 she returned to the United Kingdom to terminate her pregnancy. Her sudden leaving of Palestine is attributed, in the extant historiography, to wanting to "avoid the hot weather".¹⁸⁰

Lorna's desire not to have children was rooted in her vision of herself as an extension of Wingate—as an "armour-bearer." Her disdain for what she called a "woman's life" enabled her, in her view, to remain untroubled by what others saw as Wingate's more unusual habits and characteristics. Lorna described her state of mind capably:

But you know [...] I can think of two ways in which [Wingate] was lucky to have me as a wife. And one was that I was a very masculine little girl. Not masculine in having a deep voice and large muscles—in that sense I was very feminine. But I took a much more young man's view of life than a young woman's. It took me years, until I was about twenty-five actually, to accept the fact that I was a woman and must live a woman's life. Well, it might have been rather a hardship for me sometimes to be in this sort of hermaphroditic state of mind, but it was no trouble to your father. What it did allow for was all sorts of quirks and oddities in him which I didn't even notice. If I'd been more of a wife and less of an armour-bearer, I might have noticed them and even objected to them. But it was no hardship to me to overlook some of his stranger happenstances.

¹⁷⁸ Digital file 3, 37:30.

¹⁷⁹ Simonds, 2.

¹⁸⁰ Bierman and Smith, pg 119.

What a lovely American word. I don't know what it means exactly. Perhaps it's a happening and a circumstance all mixed up.¹⁸¹ Well, I didn't have to consciously be generous or too forgiving or any of these things because I didn't really think these happenstances mattered. In that I think he was lucky. But it did have one bad effect. A very bad one. Hold on one minute. I am going to shut the door.... Here I am again. Owing to my state of mind I didn't want any children. This is going to be one of the things they say about me in the future.¹⁸²

There is no record of Wingate being upset over Lorna's terminating of her pregnancies. She described Wingate as supportive of the terminations because of her age, and his liberality of mind. Their relationship enabled a tremendous amount of sharing with each other, such that Lorna accompanied Wingate on many of his travels throughout Palestine prior to the establishment of the Special Night Squads.

MARITAL INFIDELITY

Wingate and Lorna were not, however, totally in lockstep. When Lorna returned with Wingate to Palestine after his leave in early 1939, she suffered "one or two severe personal shocks." Lorna traces the cause of her distress without filling in a complete picture.

So Palestine was for your father and for myself a time of growth, really. He was under great stress, and sometimes he—he did curious things. He—I think they were part of his character: quite in keeping. They were not very easy to live with, but I found them quite acceptable. One of his—one of the things he used to quote was Napoleon's utterance,

¹⁸¹ The 'happenstances' portion is included to demonstrate Lorna's ability to mix humor and spontaneous observation with narrative memory.

¹⁸² Digital file 3, 34:45.

'Women: the occupation of the idle man, the relaxation of the warrior'.¹⁸³ Not a bad idea really. I think when men are under stress—particularly in time of war when things tend to be so materialistic that the whole of the gentler, personal side of life is swept aside, obliterated—there should be some redress from time to time. And I'm entirely in favor of bringing the mistresses up with the marmalade.¹⁸⁴

Elsewhere, she tells her son that she would like to know what it was about her that caused both of her husbands to be unfaithful to her.

I don't know, sweetheart, what it is about me that has failed to hold the fidelity of the only two men I've married. Because neither of them were faithful to me. And I, for all my free fancies, would have wished to be faithful.¹⁸⁵

The melancholic tone of this comment does not suit with most of the material on the tapes, which gushes forth in bursts of dark comedy, mirth, and even ecstasy. She used the tapes to argue for her and Wingate's complexity, intensity, and suitability for one another. But the comment above does capture the angst and dissatisfaction she found in marriage.

Sykes left the subject of Wingate's infidelity completely alone—his book is absolutely silent on the subject, and he may not have known about it. Sykes, in any event, depicted Lorna as a pretty and eccentric poppet, and never bothered to sketch her character. As for Wingate,

¹⁸³ Lorna's quotation actually comes from a playwright she disdained (and that Wingate loved), George Bernard Shaw, who was paraphrasing Napoleon. Napoleon's actual statement, which originated during his exile on St Helena, was quite different, in that it cynically defined love as 'the occupation of the idle man, the distraction of the warrior, the stumbling block of the sovereign.' For the Napoleon quote, see Andrew Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life* (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2014), 60.

¹⁸⁴ Lorna Paterson, Digital file 5, 39:00. 'Mistresses up with the marmalade,' that is to say, bringing up the subject in a casual way and in a casual setting. She suggests, with the phrase, that she both discussed Wingate's extramarital affairs in casual fashion, and that she will address them casually to her son, Jonathan.

¹⁸⁵ Digital file 9, 5:50.

Mosley goes as far as to describe him as “an adoring husband, faithfully constant to his wife until the moment of his death”.¹⁸⁶ It is a myth of fidelity that plays into the image of Wingate as a puritan married to a diffident, traditional wife. But besides being inaccurate, it simplifies Wingate, narrows the range of his interests, and misses out on the frequent connections between soldiering and sex, which is to say that soldiering provided Wingate with a clear hierarchy that reduced intragroup conflict, provided status and resources—status and resources that Wingate could share with his mate.¹⁸⁷

Wingate’s infidelity to Lorna—and it seems unlikely that she would have lied about this to their son so many years after the war—most likely occurred during his explorations of Palestine. Anthony Simonds states in his unpublished memoirs (archived at the Imperial War Museum) that many British soldiers (including Simonds himself) had Jewish girlfriends, though he does not specifically say this about Wingate, his good friend and officemate.¹⁸⁸ Wingate had more opportunity than most of the British for sexual infidelity because he was an intelligence staff officer responsible for northern Palestine, and given the liberty to travel to various *kibbutzim* to learn Hebrew and study Jewish militias. The kibbutz movement often took a libertine attitude towards sex. In the more radical encampments, marriage was discouraged, and children were raised in communal groups rather than in families. Wingate was especially

¹⁸⁶ Mosley. pg 33.

¹⁸⁷ Wingate’s professional writings occasionally show a serious interest in the mating practices of soldiers. Upon first returning from the Sudan and integrating back into regular soldiering, Wingate wrote a report arguing for a marriage allowance and communal housing for enlisted soldiers in order to increase retention rates, and reduce instances of venereal disease and homosexuality. OCW, IWM, ‘Early Life’ papers, Box 3.

¹⁸⁸ Simonds.

comfortable at Ein Harod, which was then the largest *kvutza*.¹⁸⁹ John Krivine, a writer who in 2013 audaciously fictionalized Lorna Paterson's tapes in his self-published book, *A Green Rose*, joined Wingate's affair to the name of a real-life Jewish-British immigrant to Palestine, Doreen Silver, and plainly imagines that Silver poached Lorna's mate.¹⁹⁰ Krivine further argued that Lorna didn't mind Wingate's sexual infidelity, but resented the intellectual partnership formed between her husband and his Jewish lovers. In response to the intellectual infidelity,¹⁹¹ Krivine has Lorna seize hold of Wingate's copies of HG Wells, toss the volumes into the kitchen sink of their Jerusalem flat, light them on fire, and burn them to ashes; Krivine even adds the detail that she afterwards thought it was a foolish thing to do because it took days to clean up the mess. Through personal correspondence, Krivine admits to having invented the episode,¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Edwin Samuel, *Handbook of the Jewish Communal Villages in Palestine, 1938* (Jerusalem: Head Offices, Keren Kayemeth Leisrael and Keren Hayesod, 1938).

¹⁹⁰ Krivine, 125. Strategies against mate poaching, including displays of jealousy, found in David M. Buss, *The Evolution of Desire: Strategies of Human Mating* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 262-70. David M Buss, "Human Mate Guarding," *Neuroendocrinology Letters* 23, no. 4 (2002).

¹⁹¹ Psychologists often offer a forced choice paradigm between sexual infidelity or emotional infidelity, with men showing greater fear of the former due to the possibility of cuckoldry, and women often showing greater fear of the latter because of the threat of outright abandonment, or a loss of shared investment in offspring. Krivine would seem to have Lorna find Orde Wingate guilty of both types of infidelity but, matching the research, she doesn't resent the sex so much as the loss of a partner. Buss et al. (1992) Sex differences in jealousy: evolution, physiology, and psychology. *Psychol. Sci.* 3, 251-255.

David M Buss et al., "Jealousy and the Nature of Beliefs About Infidelity: Tests of Competing Hypotheses About Sex Differences in the United States, Korea, and Japan," *Personal relationships* 6, no. 1 (1999). Amanda E. Guitar et al., "Defining and Distinguishing Sexual and Emotional Infidelity," *Current Psychology* 36, no. 3 (2017).

¹⁹² John Krivine, June 28, 2014, letter concerning his creation of the 'A Green Rose: the memoir of Lorna Paterson.'

though it was true enough that Lorna despaired of Wingate's attachment to socialist reformers like George Bernard Shaw and HG Wells.¹⁹³

The Jewish supernumeraries who served with Wingate on the Special Night Squads do not mention any sexual activity on the part of Wingate, but when they were interviewed about his behavior it was almost always with the view to celebrating the life of a martial Zionist champion.¹⁹⁴ They limited his quirks to the usual stories of inspiring speeches, frequent nudity, etcetera. The British soldiers followed a similar vein in their writings and oral histories.¹⁹⁵ It is impossible to know for sure what happened. Lorna tries to blame herself for his promiscuity, citing what she describes as her aloofness.¹⁹⁶ "I was terrified of my own passion for him. I felt that it was going to—that it was going to obsess me. [...] I responded to [his] passion quite readily—but the love? the tenderness? This alarmed me. I had a vision of a life engulfed in something of which I knew too little. I was—I think I was not so much cold as—I withdrew. I wasn't there. I used to walk away".¹⁹⁷ Lorna's description of her relationship reverses the popular image, reproduced thousands of times in the media, of the cold soldier walking away from his emotional and needful wife. "He took some time to grasp this, I think. By the time we

¹⁹³ Digital file 3, 32:25. "Your father had so little in the way of [Shaw's] sort of tart, paradoxical entertainment that he gulped down Shaw in great gobbets which lay about digested in his mental gut for years and years. [...] Occasionally he used to quote Shaw as though the man were Gospel. And I believe he even did think occasionally, moved by some dictum of Shaw's."

¹⁹⁴ Brenner, Zvi File No. 11.16. Testimonials on Orde Wingate. Haganah Historical Archives. Sex and family life were rapidly changing, but remained patriarchal in character despite some shifting gender roles in the Zionist-Labor movements of the 1920s and 1930s. Boord Matan, "Creating the Labor-Zionist Family: Masculinity, Sexuality, and Marriage in Mandate Palestine," *Jewish Social Studies* 22, no. 3 (2017).

¹⁹⁵ King-Clark.

Fred Howbrook, *Oral History 4619 with Fred Howbrook* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1979).

¹⁹⁶ Digital file 4, 40:00.

¹⁹⁷ Digital file 3, 45:45.

got to Palestine, where of course the tension built up immediately, he had come to accept it".¹⁹⁸

Wingate's peers either failed to notice the tension, or declined to mention it. His friend (Tony Simonds), his commander (General Wavell), his Jewish allies (especially Chaim Weizmann) and his subordinates in military intelligence mention his "beautiful," "pretty," "attractive," and "intelligent" wife, but little else about their relationship, besides their enthusiastic mutual attachment to Zionism.¹⁹⁹ In his unpublished memoir, Tony Simonds even claimed to have lived with the Wingates for a brief period in their flat in Jerusalem, but he eventually fled due to the learned, all-hours discussions and irregular mealtimes, and not because of any marital conflict between Lorna and Wingate.²⁰⁰ Perhaps, as Lorna suggests, Wingate simply looked in a different direction, without argument. "I am quite sure he didn't brood about it, and sit about biting his nails, asking himself if his wife loved him or anything of that sort. He was far too busy and far too interested in other things. He just, I imagine, shrugged his shoulders, and treated it like the weather. One day it's snowing and blowing, so you do something else. The next day the sun comes out and you enjoy that".²⁰¹ She still viewed their relationship as important, and well-matched. "I was not alien [to Wingate], but alienated. It means that I might have been the same sort of beast, but I was put apart from him by my own folly".²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ Digital file 3, 46:10.

¹⁹⁹ Wavell, 62. Ivor George Thomas, *Oral History 4545 with Ivor George Thomas* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1980). Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error; the Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (New York: Harper, 1949).

²⁰⁰ Anthony Simonds, "Pieces of War," (Imperial War Museum, 1985), 1.

²⁰¹ Digital file 3, 46:00.

²⁰² Digital file 3, 41:20.

In the audio memoirs, Lorna creates a painful (if beautiful) literary image for her perceived failures at tenderness, rather than just passion:

I think people who live a happy family life, with loving parents, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts and so on, are initiated into this business of receiving affection, so that when they come to the great open seas of love, I mean, they can swim. They start pattering, you know, and then they are promoted to the deep end, and finally they breast the billows. You do it by degrees: Your loving parents, your delightful family, your warm-hearted friends, and so on. I'd had none of this.²⁰³

Lorna's "alienated" feelings about sex and relationships continued throughout her life, though she felt that she learned more about affection as she aged. Still, she frankly states that she came to view sex as a short-term pleasure to be shared among friends, and not the fulfillment of a commitment.²⁰⁴

BREAKING A STEREOTYPE

For her own part, Lorna professed to have been "the most chaste of wives" during her time in Palestine. She resented the insinuation when one of Wingate's fellow staff officers called her "a man-eater".²⁰⁵ She was distraught at the misogynistic taunts she endured from Winston Churchill and General Dill while travelling with Wingate aboard the Queen Mary en route to the Quebec Conference in 1943,²⁰⁶ and humiliated by the sexual advances she endured during the

²⁰³ Digital file 3, 4:35.

²⁰⁴ Digital file 17, 15:30.

²⁰⁵ Digital file 4.

²⁰⁶ Churchill's private hostility to Lorna seems to have no excuse given that he invited her along as a public show of magnanimity to Wingate, a soldier returning from war. Dill, who protested aboard the ship at Lorna's presence, at least had the meager excuse of having an uncomfortable interaction with Lorna in Palestine. In 1936, having just arrived to the region, she and Wingate were invited along with Anthony Simonds to "a big dinner-party by the newly arrived GOC Palestine, General Dill." Lorna, from the end of

dismal journey back to England.²⁰⁷ (Sykes follows Churchill in depicting the Queen Mary journey as an unalloyed thrill).²⁰⁸ Lorna is even more annoyed when, after Wingate's death and their son's subsequent birth six weeks later, people would count the months in front of her to see how the arithmetic worked out.²⁰⁹ Lorna offers a forceful account of the sexism and sexual harassment she endured, but she ascribes her mild reaction to these attacks as due to her youth—she was only twenty-six with Wingate died in 1944, and felt she was not as savvy as she would be later in life.

Lorna resented the insinuations of promiscuity, but she did not argue that she maintained strict abstinence. There were opportunities for infidelity before her first husband's death. She worked, for a time, as a clerk in Special Operations Executive in London,²¹⁰ and the most challenging point in her relationship came when he disappeared into Abyssinia while she maintained their flat on Hill Street. Her frankest discussions of promiscuity—which she makes absolutely clear on digital file 17—occurred after Orde Wingate's death, in the period when she started raising money for Zionist causes as a young widow.

Lorna's unique way of conveying her attitude towards sex destroys the paper-doll sketches of Sykes, Royle, and others. Throughout the recordings, Lorna never stops the pretence of offering the stories for the benefit of her son, Jonathan Orde. The memoir turns to celebration, as well as score-keeping and rule-making in an environment of sexual freedom:

the table, shocked Simonds when she called out "You know, General, your administrative arrangements are disgraceful." Simonds, "Pieces of War," 2.

²⁰⁷ Digital file 19.

²⁰⁸ Sykes, 448.

²⁰⁹ The facial resemblance between Orde Charles and his son Jonathan Orde later proved striking.

²¹⁰ From digital file 9, 13:15: "I finally got a war job. It was a cloak and dagger job. I was neither the cloak nor the dagger. I was the cipher clerk, the SO2 for SOE—and you know all about that."

I've been immensely fortunate in my relations with your sex, my dearest boy. I've known a great many men in my life. Some as friends, and some as something a little closer. And I suppose due to this great gift bestowed upon me by my mother (which I've mentioned before), the inability to like nasty men—I can only like nice ones—I've had a succession of most delightful friends. [...] I think this speaks very well for mankind. It's true that I was an undemanding companion, that my intentions were always made plain from the start, that I took a great deal of trouble not to break any hearts, either of my men friends or their families—should they have any—and so my relationships with them were always conducted in an atmosphere of good humor, and good manners. But there was something more to it than that. The men themselves were always so kind. So gentle. So honorable. Some of them were much more amusing than others. But they all shared this quality of goodness and sweetness. Lucky, lucky me.²¹¹

Then Lorna turns to rule-making in an environment of sexual freedom:

I never wanted to be very close to a young man, because young men are generous and they fall in love (poor dears), and there are certain rules by which one should abide. One of which, as I said, is 'break no hearts.' I've also tried, and succeeded, in not making love to the husbands of my friends. And I've also tried not to make love to the friends of my husbands. This is important too.²¹²

Lorna even keeps score, and philosophizes on her preference for men:

They came in several different races, and ages. [...] I can't say with Leporello, when he was talking of his master Don Juan, 'a thousand and three in Spain alone.' But I think I've known enough about a variety of men to be able to say that when it comes to friendship, there's nothing to choose between a good man and a good woman. The only

²¹¹ Digital file 17, 4:45.

²¹² Digital file 17, 6:00 to 7:57.

thing that your sex has over mine, in my opinion, is a greater width of interests. I think this is the last track on this tape.

As she negotiates gender and class differences, mechanical recording problems will not get in the way:

I'll say that again in case it was too faint. I think this is the last track on this tape. I was saying, when the thing came to an end, that there's only one marked difference between a good man friend and a good woman friend. The man usually has wider interests than the woman, and this makes him a better companion. And then of course, there is 'la différence' which every sensible person is conscious of. I've always been happier with the foreign service, rather than the armed services—well who wouldn't be? Because the diplomats are trained to be amiable, and if they're not amiable they're not doing their job properly. I've never followed my dear Aunt Kitty, who rather liked to roll in the gutter at times.²¹³

Finally, she avers that Jonathan Orde had better hear about all this from her, rather than from someone else:

My attitude on these things had better be known to you, my darling, because presently, when I am dead, various things will be said about me. I've been called so many strange names in my life. Joan of Arc. Bloody Bitch—well perhaps they called Joan of Arc a bloody bitch in her day (they certainly called her a bloody witch). Hard as nails. Would give her last crust to a beggar. Loyal and devoted. Completely faithless. Icily remote. A nymphomaniac. I don't know what I am. I think I am a keyhole with a door around it.²¹⁴

Her reveling in sexuality offered relief from the stifling loneliness that the war inflicted on her early married life—and from the verbal brutality of being married to someone who could switch

²¹³ Digital file 17, 5:30, 8:00 to 10:15.

²¹⁴ Digital file 17, 10:15.

between warm tenderness and ruthless bullying. Though Lorna admires Orde Wingate, she does not want to sanitize him. Nor does she wish to sanitize herself. In cooperating with biographers such as Rolo and Sykes she had tried to develop a more collegial reputation for her late husband, one in which she and he were co-equal adventurers, but she hardly appeared at all in Rolo's book, and Sykes only included items that she found peculiarly denigrating and absurd.²¹⁵ Lorna's preferred version of the myth "did not come off," and so there is to be no myth at all. She conveys both the best and worst of times in stark terms.

THE EXPERIENCE OF RUTHLESSNESS

In the worst of times, though Lorna insisted that she "had no real criticisms of your father",²¹⁶ Wingate behaved as "a verbal, conversational bully. He was a mental bully".²¹⁷ It surprised Lorna that Peggy, Derek and other advocates for Wingate would mistake his character, and assess him as not a browbeater.²¹⁸ She attributed his bullying tendency to his upbringing among a fierce family of conversationalists who were also trained as Christian

²¹⁵ Digital file 2, 11:00. Sykes 'cuts' Lorna in three ways in his biography of her husband. First, he draws persistent attention to the fact that she remarried by listing her in the footnotes and the index as 'Lorna Smith' rather than Lorna Wingate, perhaps undermining her commitment to her husband's memory—and insinuating to other veterans that Jonathan Orde might not be Wingate's offspring. Second, although it is a biography rather than a military history, he barely mentions her in 42 pages out of 553 pages of prose, and he includes a photograph of Wingate's first fiancé, but none of Lorna or her son Jonathan. Lorna, in her audio memoir, does not mention the first two snubs, but she mentions the third: Sykes cites her as a source, not on issues of character or substance, but only on bits of gossip that make her look frivolous. She admits in the tapes that she cannot bring herself to read the book all the way through, even fifteen years after the book's publication. Digital file 22, 38:55.

²¹⁶ Digital file 17, 19:00

²¹⁷ Digital file 17, 19:20.

²¹⁸ Digital file 17, 19:30.

fundamentalists, a family that could be warm, gracious and entertaining, but also ruthless and dismissive. She compares the Wingate children to “wolf cubs,” and notes with irony that when she first met Colonel Wingate (Orde’s father) he prayed that God might protect “this lost little lamb”.²¹⁹ “But it was lucky for me that I was not a lamb. I may have been a Mowgli, perhaps, thrown in amongst them”.²²⁰

And I was not quite unscarred—not so much by the other Wingates—but your father had sharp teeth, and when he was bullying me—sometimes for instance he would subject me to a dissertation or an exhortation which would last an hour, and if I tried to make a point he would raise his voice. [...] Well now, this is the kind of thing that tends to make one aggressive. Not uncompromising, because I think I always had been uncompromising. But I was not aggressive when I met your father.²²¹

Besides bullying, there was a second attribute which Lorna considered critical to understanding her late husband.

He was ruthless. I should do him no service if I subscribe to a cult image and pretend that he was not ruthless. Many people saw his ruthlessness in action.²²²

Ruthlessness is probably the quality most consistently associated with Wingate. Veteran of the Abyssinian campaign Wilfred Thesiger wrote in his autobiography that “Wingate was ruthlessly ambitious, yet his aims transcended personal ambition. [...] He should have lived in the time of

²¹⁹ Digital file 25:30.

²²⁰ Digital file 17, 25:45.

²²¹ Digital file 17, 26:30. Elsewhere, Lorna describes organizing a clique of girls to complete her math homework for her while at school, and inspiring her best friend to try and stab her with a knife, and so Lorna may not have been completely free of aggressiveness prior to meeting Wingate. In 1943, she browbeat Derek Tulloch into serving on Wingate’s staff for the second Chindit campaign, an event which she describes on Digital File 1, and which Tulloch neither records in his own book (Tulloch, 126) nor told Sykes (Sykes, 466).

²²² Digital file 17, 28:55.

the Crusades. I can picture him in that brutal age, fighting with a mad gleam in his eye to liberate the Holy City, but equally determined, when it fell, to be crowned King of Jerusalem".²²³ It is an acute image, even if Wingate showed too little kingly ambition for it to fit like a glove. (He never showed as much interest in colonial administration as he did in colonial wars.) General Archibald Wavell, who consented to Wingate's campaigns in Abyssinia and Burma, did not use the word 'ruthless' but still considered him a "stern task-master".²²⁴ William Slim, the general eventually responsible for retaking Burma, thought of it as a "ruthless energy".²²⁵ The historian Jon Latimer offers the most enticing quote from Chindit officer Bernard Fergusson, and it seems to perfectly sum up Wingate's character in line with Lorna's description: "Wingate would do any evil that good might come. He saw his object very clearly in front of him, and to achieve it he would spare no friend or enemy; he would lie; he would intrigue; he would bully, cajole, and deceive. He was a hell of a great man and few people liked him".²²⁶

In the Oxford English Dictionary, the first definition of ruthless is:

1. Feeling or showing no pity or compassion; pitiless, unsparing, merciless, remorseless.

That definition does not consistently align with Wingate's behavior. He was capable of showing tremendous pity and compassion. He took an interest in helping disabled First World War veterans, he comforted the wounded or mentally distressed, he pitied the dead, he showed remorse on numerous occasions. Still, the definition does match with his verbal style, which

²²³ W. Thesiger, *The Life of My Choice* (W. W. Norton, Incorporated, 1988), 350-51.

²²⁴ Fergusson, 13.

²²⁵ Barbara Wertheim Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1971; 1972), 442.

Slim, 234.

²²⁶ Jon Latimer, *Burma: The Forgotten War* (London: John Murray, 2004), 156. In his own use of the quote, Latimer's note states that he cites Fergusson's *Beyond the Chindwin* on page 20. Unfortunately, this seems to be inaccurate.

tended towards the caustic and cutting. He directed unsparing language at his peers (whom he often tried to dominate) and he directed it at his young wife, his in-laws, his friends, etcetera.

The second definition matches Wingate much more consistently:

2. Of an action, method, etc.: without regard for the sacrifice involved; uncompromising, determined.²²⁷

That well describes the Orde Wingate who demanded that others show absolute faith in his abilities, his theories, and his political vision—damn the consequences. He understood the power of idealism, and with a mix of rising prestige and constant intimidation he demanded that others believe that he was, in fact, the ideal. Interestingly, Wingate's ruthlessness enabled him to drop interest in holding anyone (even himself) to religious standards of behavior. He rather justified his ever-evolving ideas with a pragmatic (and not wholly incorrect) *ad hoc* set of arguments centered on observed human behavior.²²⁸ As a consequence, there was no contradiction when Lorna found that her late husband hunted for useful people, and judged people's strengths and weaknesses "in a far gayer and liberal frame of mind" than his rivals supposed, and without regard to their virtues or vices.²²⁹ He could be dogmatic, but without any true dogma.

²²⁷ Oxford English Dictionary, "*Ruthless, Adj.*" (Oxford University Press).

²²⁸ Anglim describes Wingate's most consistent and original strand of military thinking as "dialectical, human-centred, and designed to direct British strength in command, training and 'national character' against enemy weaknesses in these same areas, turning superiority in training, aggression and initiative into tactical advantages." Anglim, 71.

²²⁹ Lorna Paterson, Digital File 5, 43:00, and Digital File 6.

Lorna, joining with the majority, fights against the tamer renditions of her husband offered by his best friend, Derek Tulloch, or her mother, Alice Ivy.²³⁰

[O]ne only discredits the truth if one medicines it with minor falsehoods. [...] The health and happiness of people, who may have been dear to him, weighed nothing with him. I am speaking now for myself. But one no more thought about complaining about this than his ADC complained about being run off his feet. One was glad to serve. But it's something you have to reckon with if you've lived your life with a man like your father. And it breeds some of the softness out of you yourself. [...] I think a very strong man—and your father was strong, very strong—can afford to be not only gentle, but also considerate.²³¹

Unfortunately, Lorna limited her discussion of Wingate's flaws to broad characteristics rather than specific examples. There were, however, stories which others offered up in specific detail, and which she seemed to believe. Here Lorna relates her feelings regarding Wingate's character in Abyssinia.

Of course, like all of us, he had times when he was worse than others. When his bullying and ruthlessness came uppermost for a while—apparently Derek was shocked from—by some of the reports he heard from some of [Wingate's] officers of the Ethiopian campaign, when apparently he was at his most unlikable. And they didn't like him. But I am not at all surprised.²³²

The most explicit instances of his bullying in Abyssinia are reported by Wilfred Thesiger. They are worth recounting here because they have not been widely disseminated beyond Thesiger's

²³⁰Hay. Alice Ivy, overlooking most of the "tempestuous" times before and after his marriage to her daughter, offers a generously cleaned-up and magnanimous Wingate. Indeed, she and her late husband, as well as all associated with Wingate, are cast in a warm virtuous glow quite at odds with her daughter's account. Lorna addresses its shortcomings on Digital File 22, 39:00.

²³¹ Digital file 17, 29:20.

²³² Digital file 17, 32:00

autobiography, and in that volume Thesiger expressed disappointment that Sykes chose not to publish his observations. In the first instance, Wingate lashed his translator across the face with his stick for a minor infraction. The next day, when Wingate was away, the translator and a few others broke off to smoke cigarettes. Unfortunately, petrol had leaked all around them, and when someone lit or tossed a match, the petrol ignited and burned all four men alive. Thesiger was "appalled to see four flaming figures like living torches staggering about the yard, frantically beating at their bodies with their hands". They died in awful agony, the translator calling out for the absent Wingate. Even Wingate, when he heard this incident, affirmed that he felt like a brute.²³³ In the second instance, Wingate was out of uniform when he decided to procure a pistol from captured armaments, and offer the pistol as a gift to a friend. When the leader of the guard, an Abyssinian nobleman, attempted to stop him from entering the armory, Wingate savagely struck him with his revolver.²³⁴ Thesiger offered these two instances as examples of Wingate's "ungovernable temper".²³⁵ Lorna did not quite consider Wingate ungovernable, but she did find his behavior disturbing.

I was much luckier, having the mental makeup that I did, than an ordinary wife would have been. But even I felt the strain from time to time. And my affection for him changed its quality. I came to feel more than ever, that whereas in the early days of knowing each other, before we married, what I feared was the intensity of my obsession with him, now I felt that I had to fortify myself against a positive dislike which sometimes came to me, and passed away again. It was only a shadow on the surface of something very solid.

²³³ Thesiger, 326.

²³⁴ Thesiger, 350.

²³⁵ Thesiger, 350.

Lorna believed, on the whole, that Wingate rejected violence, which is, of course, an interesting claim to make about a soldier. She herself was certainly not a pacifist, and when considering the youth culture of the 1960s and 1970s, she remarked, "Make love not war? Make love and war, I would say".²³⁶ She perhaps sought to make a Nietzschean distinction between Wingate's violence, which she thought was rare, and his cruelty, which she thought was frequent. As evidence of her argument she describes his lack of interest in violent sports, and his aversion to violent books and story-telling.²³⁷ In comparison to other soldiers of his generation, he did not revel in violence. T.E. Lawrence had a passion for front-line bloodshed during the Arab Revolt of the First World War.²³⁸ In pre-war Sudan, Reginald Scoones (a future major-general) gladly encouraged the beating of alleged witches, a development he considered of equal interest to training a new motorized machinegun unit.²³⁹ In Palestine, the boyish thrill-seeker Robert "Rex" King-Clark kept track of "kills" with notches on the buttstock of his weapon.²⁴⁰ "Bala" Bredin had his S.N.S. soldiers execute Arab prisoners—according to Lorna, to make sure he could get back to base in time for breakfast.²⁴¹

Lorna includes, however, two instances in which Wingate engaged in violence in front of her. In the first instance, Wingate, a well-regarded horseman, struck "a stupid, hysteric little horse" at Bulford shortly after their marriage when it skittishly rejected his commands. "I noted

²³⁶ Digital file 7, 39:20.

²³⁷ Digital file 3, 10:00.

²³⁸ John E. Mack, *A Prince of Our Disorder : The Life of T.E. Lawrence* (United States 1998), 154-55, 64. Lawrence's famous account of the Arab Revolt, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, famously relishes in direct combat, which provides an immediacy and clarity that counterbalances his political contortions.

²³⁹ Reginald Laurence Scoones, *Oral History 4297 with Reginald Laurence Scoones* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1979).

²⁴⁰ King-Clark, 176. In the Rex King-Clark papers in the Imperial War Museum, the soldier's transcribed journal reveals a specific envy of other soldiers who killed—not captured—Arab guerrillas.

²⁴¹ Digital file 8, 17:15.

with interest this, and I'd never seen him do anything like that before, and I never saw him do it again".²⁴² The second instance Lorna chose to recall occurred in Palestine. "I was a very difficult young thing, at times, ungovernable, you know. Fearful moods. And he was very patient, usually, but on this occasion I was standing in the middle of the drawing room, as the servants say, 'creating.' Growling. Snarling. He produced a revolver, put a shell into one of the chambers, twiddled it to the right place, pointed it at me, and said, 'If you don't behave yourself, I shall shoot you.' I believed him. I was terrified, instantly came to my senses and passed into a mood of sunny cooperation. I was very pleased with him. I thought it was exactly the right thing to do".²⁴³

If striking a horse and pointing a gun at his wife counts as violence, then Wingate's well-known use of corporal punishment in Burma, the beating of Jewish soldiers in Palestine, and the striking of Abyssinians with Gideon Force would count as violence as well. Lorna easily understates Wingate's capacity for violence, even if his share of violence from that time was less than many of his peers.

TENSIONS AND CONNECTIONS WITHIN MARRIAGE

Wingate's career fascinated and tormented Lorna. At times, Wingate's career gave cause for tremendous celebration, as when he received his first D.S.O in Palestine, or when, after his suicide attempt in Abyssinia, she enjoyed surviving wartime London with him during his convalescence,²⁴⁴ or when he became famous immediately after the first Chindit campaign. But when his ruthless drive to become leader of a Jewish army did not come off, and she

²⁴² Digital file 3, 10:35.

²⁴³ Digital file 3, 11:30.

²⁴⁴ Digital file 9, 38:00 to 43:49, and Digital file 10, 00:00 to 13:00. The wartime London section includes the story of surviving an air raid.

discovered it outside the British Museum, it was she, not he, that clung to the gate and cried. And, as every special forces soldier knows, there is some sense of control in being the person choosing when and where to go into combat, as opposed to waiting to get hit.²⁴⁵ The frustrations of wartime relationships led Lorna to offer one of her more subversive thoughts on marriage. It is an image that offers a blunt assessment of the challenges of being married to a soldier:

I don't think that one husband is enough for some women. If I were Queen of Sheba, I would have more than one husband. You see, men are busy. My husbands would be running the army, and going on missions, and when one or two of them were away, I would be able to enjoy the...society of the ones who were left at home. None of them would ever feel that they've got to amuse me, or run my errands for me. They could consult with each other if I was being difficult, give each other advice on how to.... I um, scrubbed out, some tape here. Rather silly. Facetious sort of stuff. Better done away with, I suppose, so hold on till the next sound comes up.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ "In special operations...you know how you're going in and how you're coming out. It is your initiative, based on your plan. That moment of paranoia crossing the border--and the alert serenity that follows--is almost a luxury compared to the feeling on the eve of war. In [conventional] war, all you know is how to go in. You never know how you will come out." From Muki Betser and Robert Rosenberg, *Secret Soldier: True Life Story of Israel's Greatest Commando* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 2011).

"He was the kind to convince his men by saying, 'We're going to do this or that, and we're going to win,' [...] One of the things awfully upsetting in war is not knowing what is going to happen. When I left [Wingate], I was beginning to assimilate some of the flame of this guy...". Colonel Cochran quoted in Lowell Thomas, *Back to Mandalay* (London: Frederick Mueller Ltd, 1951). and Sykes, 467.

²⁴⁶ Digital file 9, 3:15 to 4:30.

One useful aspect to Lorna's recordings is that she does not try to 'scrub out' the tape on the sly. She is not a detached narrator but as active a participant as possible. "I sound pretty horrible, don't I?" she asks on the tapes. "Rather like Queen Elizabeth—the First, I mean".²⁴⁷

The broader scope of her reflections occurs, she suggests, because of the difficulty in understanding Wingate's complexity, which in turn affected her complexity. Softening his image would also soften her image.

They are trying to sweeten his image, which has been smeared. They want to clean it up. [...] I don't think their attempt to turn him into something decently dressed, well behaved, cheerful and kind, is going to come off, because too many people knew him as something else. And if it did come off, it would reduce him. It wouldn't enlarge him.²⁴⁸

Instead, Lorna desired to present Wingate "as the great noble creature that he was".²⁴⁹ She intended to find his nobility, not ennoble him, and so she searched for the comedy, even in the darkness. When her memoir addresses what the Wingate siblings referred to as 'the curse'—a sort of manic depression that Wingate was prone to several times in his life—Lorna suggests to her son that it was "rather like the Brontës," in that it only occurred when things risked being dull.²⁵⁰ On the whole, and contrary, to Sykes, Lorna believed Wingate's life to have been a happy one—he thrived, and wanted others to thrive as well.²⁵¹ As time went by, she found that she "never missed him. [...] Such people come and they go. One must never hold onto them". She wondered if this represented a lack on her part—a thread of her "appalling aloofness." But ultimately she averred that "If you don't cling, you don't get torn apart".²⁵²

²⁴⁷ Digital file 9, 4:30.

²⁴⁸ Digital file 3, 7:30.

²⁴⁹ Digital file 3, 7:35.

²⁵⁰ Digital file 5, 21:00.

²⁵¹ Digital file 6, 18:45.

²⁵² Digital file 5, 23:50.

CONCLUSION

The historical evidence generated in Wingate's passage, and his wake, draws the accumulated historiography into the confluence of two rivers of theory, each clearly distinct in color and motion before they join and yet irreversibly miscible in the downstream of experience. One is postmodern, and carries the competing narratives, the diverse perspectives, the mutable retelling of familiar stories, and the inability to ascertain facts to a degree that might elevate military history to military science. The second river of theory is instrumentalism, whereby the inarguable fact of the existence of competing narratives (and the way they are told) encourages an interest in human beings as competitive social animals, bound to a nature that makes their behavior broadly predictable—and therefore of interest to military science. There is a postmodern Wingate: irrational and unknowable and inimitable. And there is an instrumental Wingate: rational, calculating, and—imitable. His instrumental aim was status: opportunity, command, victory, honor. The peculiarity of his particular path, and the obvious ambition he demonstrated in carving it out, can obscure how similar his objectives were to other human beings, especially those caught in the web of British social life.

The recordings of Lorna Paterson may not represent definitive history, but what oral history specialists Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson describe as the narratives of memory.²⁵³ Lorna was eager for her memories to not slip away. She never felt that time was like "a string on a row of beads," but instead a fluid, and that we have all "lost the ability to swim backwards [through time], but it's all there. The past is so close".²⁵⁴ Her observations were sharp, and well articulated. She observed, as a fundraiser for Zionist causes, the way that money loses its

²⁵³ R. Perks and A. Thomson, *The Oral History Reader* (Taylor & Francis, 2015), viii.

²⁵⁴ Digital file 17, 42:20.

absolute value for the rich, and becomes “an element, like water or air”.²⁵⁵ As a “verbalizer” with high self-regard, she could still criticize her own use of the language; when describing Wingate’s participation in a *rapprochement* between the English and German soldiers between the wars, she asks, “*Rapprochement* ? [...] Why does one use so much French? I suppose because one doesn’t know one’s English”.²⁵⁶ Despite her flair for words, by 1974 she had sworn off writing: “My idleness is too great”.²⁵⁷ Instead, Lorna created her audio memoir to force a reassessment of Orde Wingate, and her relationship with him. She succeeded. Her forceful voice illustrates her struggle with the traditional role of a war wife and war widow, and her frustrations with the inadequacy of traditional military history for communicating a soldier’s story to her family and to the public. In doing so, she examined Orde Wingate’s personal disposition and character, Lorna and Orde’s first meeting, Wingate’s treatment of his ex-fiancé, pre-war sexuality and family planning among the officer class, and her role as an “armour-bearer” for her husband. The effects of war on the lives of women, the complex roles of women in relationship to war, and the narratives women create to shape and interpret their experiences have all become the foci of rapidly developing research programs after centuries of male-centered histories of war—a tradition that stretches back at least as far as Thucydides.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Digital file 17, 4:00

²⁵⁶ Digital file 18, 2:00.

²⁵⁷ Digital file 18, 19:40.

²⁵⁸ Jean Bethke Elshtain, “Women and War: Ten Years On,” *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 4 (1998); Carol Cohn, “Women and Wars,” (2013); Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (1987); Daniela Gioseffi, *Women on War : An International Anthology of Women’s Writings from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2003); Valerie M. Hudson and Andrea M. den Boer, “A Feminist Evolutionary Analysis of the Relationship between Violence against and Inequitable Treatment of Women, and Conflict within and between Human Collectives, Including Nation States,” in

Lorna's memoir is woven with many of the threads examined in these rising research agendas. She depicts a world in which gender roles robbed her of autonomy, her mate, and then the full force of her character; she uses narrative to reclaim her past, and then elevate it.

Beyond the material covered here, Lorna used the memoirs to draw attention to many more subjects from her own life and that of her husband, including life at the Larkhill military camp (Salisbury Plain) before the war,²⁵⁹ their work with Chaim Weizmann (the first president of Israel),²⁶⁰ their relationships with Winston Churchill and David Ben-Gurion,²⁶¹ their involvement in mandatory Palestine and the growing Zionist movement, Wingate's performance as a military presenter at the Quebec Conference,²⁶² and life in London during the Second World War. But her narrative, as it gathers steam, moves on to discuss episodes that did not overlap with her marriage to Wingate, including a diplomatic journey to post-war Abyssinia,²⁶³ her life in colonial British Ceylon (Sri Lanka), the post-war troubles of Chindit and SAS commander Mike Calvert, life among Edinburgh 'society' before and after the war, her experiences in Israel during the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, her work as a fundraiser for Zionist

The Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Perspectives on Violence, Homicide, and War, ed. Todd K. Shackelford and Viviana A. Weekes-Shackelford (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Philippa Levine and Susan R. Grayzel, *Gender, Labour, War and Empire: Essays on Modern Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); David Harvey, "Women in Thucydides," *Arethusa* 18, no. 1 (1985); Kelly E. Shannon-Henderson, "Women in Thucydides: Absence and Inferiority," in *Women and the Ideology of Political Exclusion* (Routledge, 2018).

²⁵⁹ Digital files 1, 3, 17, 18.

²⁶⁰ Digital file 4, digital file 5.

²⁶¹ Churchill discussed on Digital file 4 and 19, David Ben-Gurion on Digital file 7.

²⁶² Digital file 5.

²⁶³ Digital file 15.

causes, and more. For military and social historians of the Second World War, there is more work to be done to fully assess the value of her extensive narrative.

In the recordings, Lorna Paterson illuminated the complexity of Wingate's character, and cogently interpreted his behavior even as she expressed doubt that she could ever settle the debates about her husband or any of his campaigns. "I only ask that my evidence should be taken into account. And not swept aside or denigrated, as it has been up to date".²⁶⁴ Lorna's view of these matters may not be definitive fact, but it is disruptive.

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4. “To play for his own ends”

Orde Wingate and the adoption of 'special forces' tactics and strategies

Why did Orde Wingate and his superiors adopt 'special forces' strategies and tactics, and why did individuals choose to join his 'special forces' units? The following chapters draw brief sketches of Wingate, as well as his peers, rivals, superiors, and followers during his campaigns in Sudan, Mandatory Palestine, Abyssinia, and Burma. The sketches establish a theme showing that Wingate's aggressive competition with other British officers for scarce honor and prestige spurred him to create the units he branded 'special forces.' His superiors, on the other hand, tended to adopt Wingate's special forces strategies in moments of desperation and loss, and only when they lacked the resources to win 'traditional' campaigns. Wingate's followers did not always volunteer to join his units (compulsion occurred in several instances), but many officers and soldiers joined his ranks with the intention of obtaining a role in violent combat; like Wingate, they sought the prestige and role-fulfillment that soldiers sometimes seek through war.

Despite the inherent risks of special forces tactics, many soldiers paradoxically thought their odds of survival were higher with Wingate than in traditional military formations.²⁶⁵ Leaders like Wingate promised (and demanded) precisely planned missions, and a rigorous (though sometimes ill-aimed) commitment to training. The planning and training reduced

²⁶⁵ Interviews with David Stirling's Special Air Service volunteers show a similar tendency, as the soldiers felt they were no longer “waiting to get hit” in the Western Desert. Gavin Mortimer, *Stirling's Men: The inside History of the SAs in World War II* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004).

feelings of uncertainty and increased feelings of competence, which, as experienced by the soldiers, could be mistaken for a feeling of greater safety. The evidence shows, however, that special forces were still in fact much more dangerous. In compensation, special forces leaders often rewarded their soldiers with greater autonomy, promises of extra pay and promotion, military medals, and even increased access to sexual partners. Soldiers often rejected or denigrated Wingate's methods if service in conventional military units could assure them of the opportunity for advancement, security, and the perception of safety. They also tended to resent (if not completely reject) Wingate's methods if, prior to deploying with the unit, they did not go through an indoctrination period that required a costly personal investment of time and energy in quasi-realistic training exercises. Wingate was not unique in this sense. Throughout the war, leaders who successfully organized special forces units possessed a strong imagination; they imagined and designed (and even fantasized) honorable victories, and communicated those concepts to their superiors and subordinates; the honorable victory promised to require fewer resources than a more conventional alternative, and it also promised to enable individual members of the unit to imagine their own survival. When soldiers adopted special forces tactics and strategies, self-interest tended to predominate over national interest, but that self-interest was pursued in an environment of imperfect information, high stress, and confusion. It is a fascinating and highly consequential correction to our understanding of special forces soldiering in the Second World War.

WINGATE THE COMPETITOR

The following sketch of Orde Wingate's career establishes the themes and key moments in which Wingate's ambition and creativity overlapped with the needs of those of leaders willing to sponsor him, and those soldiers willing to follow him. Wingate's biographers, such as

Christopher Sykes, tend to attribute Wingate's development of unorthodox military formations to what they deem his unique characteristics, such as eating raw onions, or reading Plato while behind enemy lines. In a broader survey of British soldiering, however, he does not appear especially unusual, and certainly not to such a degree to say confidently that his character was both necessary and sufficient for determining the path of his military career. His substantial talents—creativity, charisma, self-confidence, physical and mental endurance, ruthlessness, tolerance for eccentricity, and coolness under fire—would have also served him well in 'regular' warfare. Wingate's weaknesses—his occasional depression, his frequently "pontificating and sometimes scabrous" literary style, his tropes about "national characteristics" to justify his military plans,²⁶⁶ his "bloody-mindedness"—were shared or endured by many soldiers in regular warfare. (Britain's most famous soldier from the Second World War, Bernard Montgomery, comes quickly to mind.) Wingate's personality therefore cannot strictly account for his development of special forces units, though his character certainly shaped their rhetorical branding and their internal culture.

I have already argued, in previous chapters, that Wingate's birth order, family status, and educational opportunities bent his life towards a career in the hierarchical and highly competitive British Army, an institution geared towards organized violence, and sanctioned by his society. Wingate would spend his life within that playing field, and if he adopted unorthodox methods of warfare later, it was to gain status in the highly orthodox group to which he belonged. Whereas the military historian Simon Anglim has recently argued for the ways in which Wingate adopted British 'small wars' tactics to new technologies and new environments in an effort to gain strategic advantage against the enemies of the British Empire, I will instead

²⁶⁶ Anglim, 30.

focus on why Wingate did so, not from the perspective of military strategy, but as part of a competitive struggle with peers and rivals within a narrow coalition.

Wingate's career formally began in 1923. As a young officer, Wingate was assigned to a medium artillery unit on Salisbury Plain. His best friend and fellow officer, Derek Tulloch, viewed Wingate as typical, rather than exceptional, in his interests and attitudes.²⁶⁷ The post-war years were a dull time for soldiering, marked by a nostalgic turn towards the customs of the pre-war British Army.²⁶⁸ The fading generals of the First World War valued young officers keen on horsemanship, camaraderie, and hunting—and Wingate therefore became keen on horsemanship, camaraderie, and hunting. After a few years, Wingate studied Arabic in London in order to be 'seconded' to the Sudan Defence Force.²⁶⁹ It was a commonly sought after assignment with a competitive admittance process.²⁷⁰ He received the assignment, and the resultant five year term of service, 1928 to 1933, gave Wingate his first experience with the British Army's 'small wars' tactics that he would exploit in subsequent campaigns.²⁷¹ In the Sudan, he operated an independent command as a local *bimbashi*, responsible for a large company of Sudanese soldiers, as well as the families who lived with them. His missions along the frontier with Ethiopia were concerned with stopping slave traders, poachers, and bandits,

²⁶⁷ Tulloch.

²⁶⁸ Sykes, 39-50. Royle.

²⁶⁹ Sykes, 51-57.

²⁷⁰ Hugh Boustead, who would later serve under Wingate in Abyssinia, published an essay in the Royal United Services Institution Journal arguing that service in the SDF brought "attractions hard to find elsewhere" including "increased responsibilities of command." J.E.H. Boustead, "The Camel Corps of the Sudan Defence Force," *Royal United Services Institute Journal* 79, no. 515 (1934).

²⁷¹ Ibid. Anglim, 18-28.

and British officials high in the administration of Sudan credited the young officer with showing “great dash and judgment”.²⁷² Wingate, confident in his navigation and maneuvers (the riding in England had not been entirely frivolous), tried to cut the bandits off from their sanctuary, and he used deception, surprise, and the careful use of terrain, “all things Wingate would stress later” in Palestine, Abyssinia, and Burma.²⁷³ The Sudan service proved the longest continuous assignment in Wingate’s career.

If anything in Wingate’s personal life provided a decisive turn from the ‘orthodox’ to ‘unorthodox,’ it was the combination of his marriage to an outspoken and fiery teenager, Lorna Paterson, in 1935, and his failure to get into staff college in the next year, the latter of which could have proven a devastating setback for his military career. The rejection from staff college embarrassed Wingate before his spouse, his family, and his peers, and it seemed to shatter his prospects of a full career alongside the other officers of the British Army.²⁷⁴ He had felt that he had more to offer the military. One of his favorite utterances, “Civilization is based on service” depended upon his submission to an understandable social order, and now that social order no longer seemed to need him.²⁷⁵ He had, up to 1936, more or less respected the hierarchy of the military (often called the ‘chain-of-command’), though he occasionally had leaned on family status via his famous Uncle Rex (Reginald Wingate), the former Governor-General of the Sudan

²⁷² Wingate’s famous surname likely influenced the reading of his report. Comment from the Governor General of the Sudan, Sir John Loader Maffey, on the Report on the Dinder Patrol from 11th to 26th April 1931 by El Bimbashi O.C. Wingate. OCW Box 1, Folder 1/10/2/1-13, IWM.

²⁷³ Anglim, 34.

²⁷⁴ Sykes, 100-01.

²⁷⁵ Lorna Wingate, “Remember your father’s famous utterance, ‘Civilization is based on service.’” Paterson. Digital file 9, 00:55.

and *Sirdar* of the Egyptian Army, in order to obtain certain privileges or opportunities. He had served in the Sudan, one the most trying reaches of the empire, for five years—and he had leaned on Uncle Rex for that.²⁷⁶ But when he leaned again, this time to obtain a seat in the staff college, nothing came of it, despite the decent test scores he earned on his second attempt in 1936.²⁷⁷ Perhaps even worse, Wingate had sold himself to his young wife, Lorna Paterson, as a man of consequence and a man of action; but serving as a brigade adjutant in the Territorial Army he was neither. His wife, in fact, felt destined to marry a *famous* soldier, but her soldier, rather than continuing his adventures throughout the empire, seemed destined to finish his career working a few weeknights (and every weekend) in a slow-paced Territorial unit, and collapsing into a dull melancholy in Sheffield.²⁷⁸ Now he was on the verge of walking out the army as a captain, a mere three grades above the rank with which he had begun. His father had carried out a dull military career watching the grass grow in India and assessing its usability as forage, but his father had at least achieved the active rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and retired a Colonel.²⁷⁹ Orde Wingate was not even the most renowned among his siblings. His older sister, Sibyl Wingate, had already completed her doctorate, conducted research throughout Western Europe, and then allied with the Republican partisans in Spain; she had

²⁷⁶ Sykes.

²⁷⁷ Anglim, 43-45.

²⁷⁸ The best depiction of Wingate's mental state at this time comes from the 'Edinburgh Manuscript' of Lorna Paterson, only available now as an excerpt in Royle, 92. The story of Lorna's fate to marry a famous soldier originates from a palm reading in Ceylon, when Lorna Paterson was five years-old. Best described in Lorna Paterson, digital file 10, 30:05. Also described (more romantically) in Hay.

even lobbied to high ranking British Labour members such as Ernest Bevin and Stafford Cripps for Britain's direct intervention in the Spanish Civil War.²⁸⁰

Orde Wingate, on the other hand, faced an exit from his military career with no obvious professional prospects and no substantial pension.²⁸¹ Humiliated, recently married, and

²⁸⁰ The product of her research can be found in S. D. Wingate, *The Mediaeval Latin Versions of the Aristotelian Scientific Corpus: With Special Reference to the Biological Works* (Dubuque: W.C. Brown Reprint Library, 1931; 1963). Sibyl Wingate's experiences in Spain are partly described by Jackson, 5. Fleay and Sanders.

²⁸¹ In spite of the failure—or perhaps because of it—Wingate kept his staff college test papers filed away. One short-answer essay attempted, in his words, a 'Comparative Sociology of Law and Government', in which he described America as a nation in the thrall of narrow-minded lawyers trained to manipulate public rules for private gain. His other paper addressed the geopolitical issues of Palestine and the Transjordan. Together, both papers reflected Wingate's commitment working with and for the political institutions in which he had been raised, namely, the British Army and the British Empire. Even the private adventure he had taken in the 'Great Sea of Sand' in the Libyan desert, when described in the Royal Geographic Society's journal, revealed a through commitment to a competitive spirit focused on advancement within the British Empire.

Jackson, 5; O.C. Wingate, "Paper by Lieutenant Oc Wingate Ra, Subject "B" -- Strategy in Three Campaigns," in *The Wingate Palestine Papers*, ed. The British Library (1926). IWM OCW 1/2/7. Anglim, 43-44. Orde Wingate, "In Search of Zerzura," *The Geographical Journal* 83, no. 4 (1934).

Victorian England saw a rise in narratives of individuals demonstrating a willingness to sacrifice livelihoods and sometimes lives for the sake of knowledge, and Wingate's journey into the

childless—with this frame of mind he undertook what his peers and biographers considered a galling breach of protocol and a tremendous risk. Wingate’s gambit was to intrude upon the cadre surrounding the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), Field-Marshal Cyril Deverell, in the middle of a Territorial field exercise, and to then force the CIGS’s interest in Wingate’s admittance to the staff college.²⁸² Wingate, ignoring any protests from Deverell’s staff, inquired whether or not Deverell had known that Wingate had published a personal account of a geographic exploration he had undertaken in the Libyan desert. Deverell confessed he was unaware of this. Wingate insisted this was the sort of information a CIGS needed in order to determine who should or should not attend staff college. Deverell did not dismiss Wingate’s interruption out of hand, but instead tried to find some kind of staff position for the young officer. The risk had paid off in a moment in which Wingate had little leverage, but a keen sense of comparative worth alongside his peers. Wingate received a staff position in Palestine, one normally reserved for subalterns rather than middle-aged captains, but it at least offered him a way forward.²⁸³

Palestine, 1937-1939

After posting to northern Palestine with the 5th Infantry Division, Wingate was quickly lent to the General Headquarters in Jerusalem. In the turbulent run up into the Second World

desert—and especially his depiction of archaeological and geological findings and his publication of those findings in a formal journal—participated in that narrative, and he expected it to be recognized and rewarded by others. G. Levine, *Dying to Know: Scientific Epistemology and Narrative in Victorian England* (University of Chicago Press, 2002).

²⁸² Sykes, 100-02.

²⁸³ Anglim, 14, 63.

War, the Palestine command changed rapidly, with its highest position held (in sequence) by John Dill, Archibald Wavell, and Robert Haining in just three years' time. Wingate's staff position was called 'Special Service Officer;' he was one of six Special Service Officers (SSO) serving on the staff, with each officer assigned to a different region of Palestine. Wingate was oriented towards northern Palestine and the area of operations of the 5th division, commanded by Bernard Montgomery. All of the SSOs fell under the Royal Airforce Intelligence Organisation, Jerusalem,²⁸⁴ a curious aftereffect of aircraft having served as the primary means of intelligence during the British campaign against the Ottoman Empire in the First World War. In his new post, Wingate made friends easily with his officemate, a young lieutenant named Anthony Simonds, and won the confidence of a young corporal, Ivor Thomas, who served as Wingate's clerk under the humorous nickname 'Bombardier'.²⁸⁵ Wingate impressed Thomas with his quick commitment to creating an intelligence index for all persons appearing in intelligence reports or newspapers; the index became a widely appreciated and useful tool.²⁸⁶ Simonds, for his part, introduced Wingate to Zionism, and quickly found his commitment to the ideology outpaced by the slightly senior officer. One of the more interesting claims found in Simonds' unpublished memoir is that Wingate began stealing and passing on British military intelligence papers to the Haganah.²⁸⁷ Simonds demanded that Wingate cease the behavior, and when he refused, Simonds skipped several links in the military hierarchy and reported Wingate's behavior directly

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 74-75.

²⁸⁵ Simonds, "Pieces of War." Thomas.

²⁸⁶ ; ibid.

²⁸⁷ The claim that Wingate slipped classified papers to Jewish operatives appeared in early post-war biographies of Wingate, but the claim was anonymous. Simonds was the probable origin of many of the over-heated stories of Wingate's time in Palestine, and he seemed to resent his friend's fame.

to Wavell (possibly because Wavell first met Simonds and Wingate at a private function at Chaim Weizmann's home).²⁸⁸ The event does not seem to have had much of an effect on the general. Instead of reprimanding Wingate, or placing him under arrest, he instead sent Wingate out of the office to conduct reconnaissance on smuggling routes in northern Palestine, an order that gave Wingate tremendous freedom of movement. Jewish sources confirm that Wingate passed on intelligence reports, and to Chaim Weizmann he forwarded information about Foreign Office correspondence with the Arab monarchies.²⁸⁹ It is not clear what was contained in the reports in most instances—it may have simply been information regarding potential attacks on Jewish settlements or persons, and Wingate could have appealed to the general on moral grounds that it was information that the Jews should have anyway. Wingate could also point out that his bias was not blindly towards Zionism, for he had begun to learn Hebrew, not to communicate with the Haganah, but because he refused to trust the Jewish clerks hired to translate Hebrew newspapers, and instead had bragged to his commanders—General John Dill in particular—that he would undertake to learn Hebrew himself.²⁹⁰ In any event, Wingate obtained unusual freedom to move about the country, and his (good) Arabic and (poor) Hebrew made his travel somewhat easier. He began cultivating ties both to a British commander in the Galilee, Brigadier John Evetts, and Zionist leaders in the region. Wingate offered to fill a gap in military capability by creating and commanding some kind of direct combat unit, a mixed unit of British soldiers and Jewish militia, in order to fulfill British military objectives. In an environment

²⁸⁸ Simonds, "Pieces of War."

Anglim, together with the accounts of Simonds and Wavell, shows that an oft repeated story of Wingate 'holding up' Wavell's car was a myth. The story appears in Sykes, 142.

²⁸⁹ Royle, 108.

²⁹⁰ Thomas.

where the British Army was ruthlessly crushing Arab resistance by bulldozing homes, hanging 'bandits', and raiding village after village with the aid of motorized transport, Wingate would lead foot patrols on cross-country excursions similar to what he had undertaken in the Sudan.²⁹¹ It was an appropriately familiar set of tactics. It also had a chance of working since Arab attacks had shifted from guerrilla warfare to small scale 'gangster' terrorism.²⁹²

The particular problem that Evetts decided he wanted Wingate to solve was the protection of an oil pipeline. It ran from Kirkuk in northern Iraq to the port of Haifa in northwestern Palestine, and in the latter area it was vulnerable to sabotage.²⁹³ Arab guerrillas could puncture the pipeline with a rifle. The oil would burst forth, disrupting the supply chain.²⁹⁴ For extra effect, the Arab guerrillas or bandits would light the oil on fire, which would create a tower of flame "seventy or eighty feet in the air and could be seen by half of Palestine".²⁹⁵ For the British, the pipeline was a valuable resource. The spectacular attacks on it undermined the sense of British control over the security situation. But the pipeline ran through a relatively isolated area, away from the high traffic, high population districts the British Army prioritized.²⁹⁶ The attacks occurred at night, and the British Army's company-sized formations would, in any event, be too clumsy to chase down the handful of offenders. The pipeline's regular disruption

²⁹¹Anglim, 64.

²⁹² Ibid., 57-59.

²⁹³ Ibid., 88.

²⁹⁴ Howbrook.

²⁹⁵ Humphrey Edgar Nicholson Bredin, *Conrad Wood Interviews H.E.N. 'Bala' Bredin About the Special Night Squads* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1980).

²⁹⁶ The British forces at the time suffered from "severe overstretch" which encouraged both Evetts and Robert Haining to become "another Wingate backer." Anglim, 69.

embarrassed the British, and Wingate, as he would find himself doing in Abyssinia and Burma, offered a way of easing that embarrassment by creating a unique unit at a relatively low investment in terms of men and materiel. Though the pipeline was remote from British bases, it did run very close to armed Jewish settlements. Wavell had sent Wingate into the field, but it was Haining (Wavell's replacement) who gave Wingate a blessing to work under Evett's supervision, thus further separating Wingate from the direct control of Jerusalem HQ. Evett's gave Wingate permission to raise Jewish units trained and led by British officers, noncommissioned officers, and other enlisted personnel.²⁹⁷ Wingate seemed to be "a master of doing more with less",²⁹⁸ and by requiring so few British soldiers to form his detachments, Wingate did not threaten the officers already holding command opportunities in Palestine, and he therefore received little pushback from his peers. In May and June of 1938, Wingate began leading his first nighttime patrols; at this time, he was the only British member of these patrols, and his soldiers were entirely Jewish.²⁹⁹ Operations quickly heated up once Wingate received his British cadre.

Wingate branded his new units the Special Night Squads, or SNS. As in the Sudan, Wingate emphasized surprise, economy of force, and security.³⁰⁰ Wingate met these basic

²⁹⁷ *Orde Wingate and the British Army, 1922-1944*, ed. Louis Sicking Paul E. J. Hammer, Frank Tallett, Donald J. B. Trim, Warfare, Society and Culture (London: Pickering & Chatto Ltd, 2010), 65-66, 69-74.

²⁹⁸ Shoshana Bryen to Times of Israel, April 24, 2012, 2012, <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/from-aharai-to-afghanistan-remembering-orde-wingate/>.

²⁹⁹ Orde Wingate, "H.E.N. Bredin's Copy of Orde Wingate's Appreciation of 5 June 1938," ed. British Army (Palestine: Imperial War Museum, 1938), 3-12.

³⁰⁰ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*.

principles with a disciplined set of operating procedures, so that he personally showed his men how to conduct such warfare with modern weapons. He loved the details of map-reading, night movements, and the employment of machine guns, but he could also step back and offer a detailed appreciation of the wider strategic picture, which enabled his men to feel more “in control” of their lives, and more purposeful.³⁰¹ The Special Night Squads reduced the number of attacks on the Haifa pipeline, antagonized several Arab villages, and intercepted the perpetrators of a massacre of unarmed Jewish men, women and children.³⁰² For his service in Palestine, Wingate earned his first DSO award (Distinguished Service Order), an extremely unusual achievement for a British soldier in peacetime.³⁰³

In our century, Wingate and the Special Night Squads hold a mixed reputation. Many journalists, historians, and soldiers lionize the units as the forerunners to the Israeli Defense Force.³⁰⁴ For the first time, Jewish soldiers adopted aggressive patrolling techniques, and sought to dominate the terrain both day and night. Other recent commentators, following the Israeli ‘revisionist’ Tom Segev, blame the SNS for establishing a culture of brutality against the

³⁰¹ For the effect of his briefings on soldiers in Palestine, see King-Clark. And Arthur interviewed by Conrad Wood Lane, *Oral History 10295 with Arthur Lane* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1988).

³⁰² Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 84-90.

³⁰³ Sykes.

³⁰⁴ Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2013); Dayan. Abram Akavia, *Orde Wingate: His Life and Mission* (Tel Aviv: Maarahot Publishers, 1993).

Palestinians.³⁰⁵ The SNS certainly participated in retaliatory raids and physical abuse. Lorna Wingate, Orde Wingate's wife, even accused H.E.N. Bredin, Wingate's second-in-command, of the cold murder of captured prisoners, an act which led Wingate to bar Lorna from speaking with Bredin because "he had blood on his hands".³⁰⁶ On the basis of the evidence, some historians now refer to Wingate as a war criminal,³⁰⁷ a somewhat anachronistic phrase for 1938. Perhaps more importantly an imprecise, poorly sourced, and myopic application of the term 'war criminal' applied to Wingate's behavior obscures the extreme frequency (and broader influence) of British violence at the time, not just in Palestine, but in Northern Ireland, India, and throughout the empire.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ The most popular source of this argument is Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete : Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* trans. Haim Watzman (London: Little, Brown, 2000).

³⁰⁶ Paterson. Digital file 8, 20:00 to 30:00.

³⁰⁷ The clearest example is Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War, 1941-45* (New York St. Martin's Press, 1985).

³⁰⁸ Matthew Hughes, *Britain's Pacification of Palestine: The British Army, the Colonial State, and the Arab Revolt, 1936-1939*, Cambridge Military Histories (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019). For a balanced and contextualized assessment of the Special Night Squads, see Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 47-93. Also: Segev. Historian Bernard Wasserstein interviewed many members of what he described as the 'official mind' of Mandatory Palestine, and found that they thought of Wingate as a 'fanatic.' But many of those opinions were formed in the disastrous days of the collapse of British rule in Palestine; the postwar 'official mind' knew the Wingate of 1938 through hearsay, rather than personal knowledge. (Source: personal interview.) See

During Wingate's time in Palestine, the British military's assessments of the value of his actions with the SNS shifted over the course of a single year. Fascinatingly, the shift occurred not due to anything the SNS actually did in Palestine, but rather what their leader did while on leave in London. The historian Simon Anglim shows that in July of 1938, at the height of SNS activity, Haining was proud to have Wingate "on my Staff," and viewed Wingate's Special Night Squads as a unit of "great resource, enterprise and courage." Haining further argued that "this form of activity ... provide[s] a great tribute to the initiative and ingenuity of all concerned".³⁰⁹ A year later, Haining would reverse course, and argued that Wingate tended "to play for his own ends and likings instead of playing for the side".³¹⁰ It was a striking reassessment.³¹¹

What had happened? Wingate had, in short, gone home and jumped the chain of command, disrupting the carefully structured hierarchy of the British Army. During the SNS

also Bernard Wasserstein, *On the Eve: The Jews of Europe before the Second World War* (London: Profile, 2012); *Herbert Samuel and the Partition of Palestine* (Yarnton, England Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, 1990); *Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939-1945* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1979).

A follow up study to this dissertation takes up the question of war crimes and British behavior using the comparative perspectives of three different soldiers: Ivor Thomas, Thomas Lane, and Anthony Simonds. J.M. Meyer, *Three Profiles in Mandatory Palestine During the Arab Uprising, 1936-1940* (2020).

³⁰⁹ Anglim, 46. Anglim found the quote at PRO W032/9497, 5-7.

³¹⁰ Anglim, 46 again supplies Haining's useful quote, and places it against the first comment to show the massive shift in opinion Wingate's politicking engendered in his commander. Robert Haining, "Remarks of Goc 10/7/39," in *Wingate Palestine Papers*, ed. British Army (London: British Library).

operations in the summer of 1938, one of Wingate's squad members had negligently fired a machinegun, severely wounding Wingate in both legs. This necessitated a convalescence, which Wingate and his wife determined to take advantage of by returning to London, though he had not actually received permission to do so. There they leveraged Wingate's recent experiences with the SNS to expand his network of influential patrons, quickly adding Lord Rothschild, Leo Amery, Liddell Hart, Winston Churchill, and many others.³¹² Lorna would later remember:

When [Wingate] came back to England in the early of autumn of 1938—and made his first contact with Churchill, and indeed had a most interesting time, and then only a couple of months, and those quite unofficial—he absented himself without leave in order to try and persuade the politicians that Britain should support the Jews and that there should be no partition of Palestine, and other matters of state.³¹³

For a junior officer to try and influence public policy represented a serious (although not wholly unusual) breach in protocol. This is why Haining felt that Wingate tended "to play for his own ends." This stops short of Wingate being a selfless ideological Zionist, sacrificing himself for the Zionist cause. Wingate, instead, argued to his British commanders and peers that he was not playing for his own ends, but for the good of the British Empire, and the good of the Zionist Jews he thought best suited to serve the Empire's interests in the region.³¹⁴ Yet Haining's

³¹² Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 84-87.

³¹³ Paterson. Digital file 8, 22:00.

³¹⁴ Orde and Lorna Wingate, presuming they understood Zionist interests better than the Jewish Zionists living in London, would try to forcefully persuade Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion to take more confrontational positions with the British government and to 'bang on the table' and demand a Jewish fighting force of some kind throughout 1939 and 1940. Their Jewish friends viewed their suggestion as

critique hits upon a sound problem in military culture—the balance between the necessarily relentless pursuit of advancing one’s career in a competitive environment (and Wingate certainly thought his advocacy for a Jewish Army could advance his own career), and maintaining the perception that one is unselfishly placing one’s ambition at the good of the common cause—a vague concept that might be translated into a action in many different ways in a rapidly changing world.³¹⁵ In any event, Haining found Wingate’s removal from Palestine in 1939 “timely” and helpful in preventing further embarrassments for the British Army.³¹⁶ When Wingate read how his actions had been described in his personnel report, he overestimated their negative influence on his career and took advantage of an obscure footnote in British military law that allowed him to appeal the report directly to the sovereign. His other well-placed friends, however, convinced him such a step was unnecessary, and that he overestimated the negative influence the report might have on his career in the regular service.³¹⁷

bad diplomacy and, though they loved both of them, they felt it would better serve Orde Wingate’s interests rather than their own. Lorna Paterson, Digital file 4, 23:00. Sykes, 182.

³¹⁵ Anglim, 91-93, argues that British military praxis expected Wingate to prioritize the immediate security situation over long term political objectives, and that Wingate’s action prioritized the latter at the expense of the former. I tend to view Haining’s crackdown on Wingate as a wrist-slap for disrupting the chain-of-command and its disciplined hierarchy—and a possible threat to the status of the leaders in Jerusalem should the politicians in London side with Wingate and override the interests of Jerusalem H.Q.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Sykes, 216-19. Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 87.

It was with these setbacks in hand that, at the outbreak of world war, Wingate found himself as a staff officer on an antiaircraft artillery unit protecting England from German bombers.³¹⁸ Though he resented the position, he still threw his restless mind at the problems of air defense, and argued for the army to reorient the guns so that they faced towards the prospective targets of the Germans, thereby enabling a concentration of fire at the moment when the enemy planes were most vulnerable.³¹⁹ He wrote another report arguing for the reassignment of all staff officers (possibly even himself) not empowered to make independent decisions, stating that "A formation which acts merely as a letter-box is simply a block in the blood circulation".³²⁰ Wingate, however, spent much of Britain's phony war and finest hour politicking for higher status work. In one effort, he received encouragement from the commander-in-chief of the Home Front, 'Tiny' Edmund Ironside, to create a counterinsurgency unit designed to foil the efforts of possible Nazi sympathizers; it offered the chance for heroics in the event of a German invasion, but it came to naught.³²¹ Wingate was also especially interested in the possibility of raising a Jewish Legion or army to help secure the Middle East for the British Empire, improve Zionist military capacity, and provide himself with a large and

³¹⁸ *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 105-07. He also, out of boredom, wrote a (probably) satirical paper arguing that staff officers' phones should come with a regulator to limit the number of incoming calls, thereby avoiding distractions from other work. OCW papers, IWM.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ Letter dated 5 October 1939, from O.C. Wingate to Lt. Col. Appleton, "Dear Colonel, you asked me yesterday to elaborate my views on the elimination of unnecessary battery staff..." O.C.W. Box 2, File 2. IWM.

³²¹ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 110-10.

independent opportunity for command.³²² Wingate nearly obtained his goal. The War Office hesitated, however, and in Wingate's view this was due to fears that a Jewish military unit might lead to further unrest in the Arab world.³²³ Instead, to Wingate's dismay, he found that General Archibald Wavell, his former commander in Palestine, had followed the advice of the Secretary of State for India, Leopold Amery, and requested the War Office to draw up orders to send Wingate to Cairo in order to help in the campaign to liberate Abyssinia from the Italian empire. Upon confirmation of the orders, and learning of his Zionist friends' inability to prevent his disappearance into what seemed like a subservient and anonymous role, Wingate's wife broke into tears of frustration and clutched the railing outside the British Museum.³²⁴ It precipitated one of the low points in Wingate's relationship with his wife, a relationship which was passionate (but often distant), childless by choice, and marked by a significant age difference.³²⁵ Within the past few months she had already had one or two personal shocks—probably to include the discovery of Wingate having an affair—and recovered from a medically induced abortion.³²⁶ Wingate and Lorna hardly heard from each other until he returned from the campaign a year later.³²⁷

The next section will continue to examine Wingate's story from his narrow perspective.

³²² Sykes. Anglim.

³²³ Paterson. Digital file 4, 15:00.

³²⁴ Lorna also explicitly blamed Chaim Weizmann for not doing enough to keep Wingate on track to command a Jewish Army. She felt that he had sold out Wingate's future in order to stay on good terms with the British elite. Ibid. Digital file 4, 29:00. Described briefly in Royle, 172.

³²⁵ Paterson.

³²⁶ Ibid. Digital file 3, 37:00. Digital file 9, 3:00.

³²⁷ Ibid. Digital file 3, 15:50.

Abyssinia, 1940-1941

Once Wingate reached Cairo he received a staff posting, and a promotion to major. As a staff officer of middling rank, he would have been expected to support the needs of higher ranking officers at the battalion, brigade, division, corps, or theater level.³²⁸ Staff jobs are useful to an army, and often essential, but they are not glorious and rarely make the front pages or the history books.³²⁹ Wingate, as was typical of his ambition and ego, was not satisfied with the staff position.³³⁰ He then adopted a flair for maximum attention.³³¹ He strutted out of meetings with generals when they ran too long. He began to wear an alarm clock on his wrist to emphasize the value of his time. He grew a beard. He wore an old-fashioned sun helmet to evoke the image of a previous generation of British explorers. Just as modern special forces soldiers are instantly recognizable with their rotating costume of berets, untrimmed beards, baseball hats, and conspicuously displayed equipment, so too was Wingate. He topped all his showmanship with a close political interest in the deposed Abyssinian leader, Haile Selassie, and persistently stated that a campaign in Abyssinia would be about Abyssinian

³²⁸ James Donald Hittle, *The Military Staff, Its History and Development* (Military Service Publishing, 1944).

³²⁹ Hugh Boustead would later criticize Wingate for having too little experience with battalion or brigade sized operations, the kind of which Wingate might have obtained as a staff officer. Boustead.

³³⁰ Staff positions do, however, enable career advancement, which is why Wingate had sought to attend staff college in 1937. Staff jobs are also safer than leading troops in direct combat—a key consideration for many people, even career soldiers. Yet “the work is drudgery, attracting neither glamour nor thanks”. Bidwell, 55.

³³¹ Thesiger, 319-21.

liberation, and not about the battle between the imperial powers of Italy and Britain.³³² At a military conference in Khartoum on December 2nd, Wingate gave what Sykes calls “one of his finest performances,” as he argued for the political and military potential for a campaign of indirect warfare in western Abyssinia.³³³ Wingate expanded far beyond his allotted ten minutes. He suggested that his campaign plan would allow Wavell to withdraw the bulk of British forces from Kenya and the Sudan, freeing them to be used in North Africa and Greece.³³⁴ Wavell did not have quite that much faith in guerrilla warfare, but historian Simon Anglim has found that as early as 1939 Wavell’s staff stated that “operations should be conducted more on the lines of those undertaken by Lawrence of Arabia” and avoid relying too heavily on “regular” warfare.³³⁵ In fact, British agents were already on the job in western Abyssinia,³³⁶ but Wingate sought to relegate them to political roles and administrative tasks, and he undermined their influence by cultivating a direct relationship with Haile Selassie, the deposed emperor. Wingate politicked with Major-General Platt to receive overall command of ‘Mission 101,’ a guerrilla unit which had been organized by Colonel Dan Sandford, and focused on arming Abyssinian ‘Patriots’ in the western highlands along the Sudanese border. Much

³³² David Shirreff, *Bare Feet and Bandoliers: Wingate, Sandford, the Patriots and the Part They Played in the Liberation of Ethiopia* (London: The Radcliffe Press, 1995), 56-59, 77-80.

³³³ Ibid., 49-52.

³³⁴ Sykes, 252.

³³⁵ Smith to Platt of 28 September 1939, in PRO WO201/2677, Para.2.

Anglim, Simon (2014), pg 113.

³³⁶ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 94-103; Shirreff, 29-63.

to Sandford's chagrin, Wingate received the command, perhaps in spite of telling Platt that all commanders over fifty years of age ought to be shot (Platt pointed out that he was fifty-two: but he still backed Wingate and sidelined the older Sandford in the role of political advisor to Haile Salassie).³³⁷ Wingate, still just in his late thirties, also received command of two battalions, one drawn from Ethiopian exiles in Kenya, and the other from volunteers in the Sudan Defence Force under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Hugh Boustead, a veteran of multiple campaigns, including the western front in the First World War.

Wingate, alongside Haile Selassie, crossed the border from the Sudan into Ethiopia on 18 January 1941.³³⁸ They had relatively few soldiers, and would receive almost no further logistical support from an overstretched Middle East Command. The plan was to establish a large coalition of 'irregular' guerrilla forces around a dependable nucleus of British colonial troops.³³⁹ A poorly chosen entry route (one that Wingate insisted on) destroyed their motor vehicles. Then they reached the highlands, and their desert camels began dying in terrific numbers—tens of thousands would perish from exhaustion and starvation.³⁴⁰ Gideon Force endured high casualties (fifty-percent in some units) from exhaustion and combat. But they harassed more than twenty-thousand beleaguered Italian soldiers and colonial forces into

³³⁷ Paterson. Digital file 11, 47:30.

³³⁸ Shirreff, 64-77.

³³⁹ Ibid., 212.

³⁴⁰ W.E.D. Allen, *Guerrilla War in Abyssinia* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1943).

surrender (Wingate would later claim as many as 40,000);³⁴¹ meanwhile, the British regulars assaulted Italian strongholds to the north and south of Gideon Force's operational area and ensured the campaign's overall success. With nearly all the Italian forces defeated, Wingate and the Emperor Selassie entered Addis Abba in triumph, thus restoring what Wingate liked to think of as the world's longest surviving independent monarchy. Wingate's Ethiopian and Sudanese soldiers felt vindicated. His British officers and soldiers, however, felt proud but underappreciated by Middle East Command. Wingate received orders to return to Cairo in the first week of June.³⁴²

For his efforts, Wingate would receive his second DSO. But upon reaching Cairo he found "neglect and ingratitude" for his accomplishments in the midst of severe setbacks for the British Empire in Greece, Crete, and the Western Desert.³⁴³ Wingate wanted better pay and recognition for his soldiers, additional command opportunities, and the implementation of his guerrilla tactics on a larger scale—especially in the campaign against Germany. In his official report, he denigrated the contributions of the British generals responsible for destroying the majority of the Italian army in Ethiopia; he argued that they used wasteful, dated tactics rather than exploring new methods based on current technology, sound judgment, and the principles of war.³⁴⁴ The generals (and many staff officers throughout the theater) took umbrage to the suggestion that Wingate triumphed while they loitered about wasting men and munitions. But

³⁴¹ William Platt, "Report by Lt. Gen. William Platt, K.C.B., D.S.O., on the Operations in the Eritrea and Abyssinia from 1st December, 1940, to 26th August, 1941," in *The War in East Africa 1939-1943*, ed. Martin Mace John Grehan, Despatches from the Front (South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword, 1941).

³⁴² Sykes, 319-20.

³⁴³ Ibid., 336.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 322-28.

the unusual character of Wingate's triumph coupled with the obvious political victory of restoring the Emperor to his throne helped preserve Wingate's popularity among the likes of Wavell and Amery, which shone all the brighter in the bleak nadir of British strength in the region. But there were many rungs on the ladder between Wingate and the high command. He received his DSO and a notice in despatches, but with the loss of his command he would soon be returned to the rank of major. The demotion from his temporary rank of colonel would result in reduced pay and prestige. Further, GHQ bureaucrats threatened to dock his pay due to a trivial accounting error. And his British officers and enlisted soldiers had received—up to that point—nothing of what Wingate had promised them.³⁴⁵

In this already unstable condition, Wingate received a prescription for Atabrine to fight off the malaria he had contracted during the Abyssinia campaign. The drug, at high doses, has depressive effects, and under the influence of malaria his body raged at a high fever. On July 4th, Wingate locked himself in his quarters and stabbed his own throat.³⁴⁶ A soldier downstairs heard Wingate's body crashing to the floor; the neighbor broke into the room and dragged Wingate's unconscious form to the hospital next door. Miraculously, Wingate survived the attempted suicide; less miraculously, his ruthless ambition and callous handling of staff officers also survived. A consultant in psychological medicine soon determined that Wingate was no longer suicidal, and that he should be sent home for a long convalescence.³⁴⁷

This happened at a moment when a recent subordinate, Hugh Boustead, had urged Wingate to quickly turn towards other battles in the Middle East, and when Wingate had told another subordinate, Donald Nott, that he intended to "worry the authorities into allowing him

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 323.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 331.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 330-35.

back into Palestine with the object of raising a Jewish army".³⁴⁸ Wingate had instead arrived in Cairo and attempted suicide. It proved the end of his actions, if not his ambitions, in the Middle East, and it had occurred at a time when Middle East commanders, facing awful losses in every direction, were particularly open to the kind of military entrepreneurism that Wingate brought to the table.³⁴⁹ It seems Wingate's suicide attempt came at a moment when there were many paths open to the service of 'King and country', or supporting his Jewish allies, or further exploring his military theories. The crushing blow of his loss of status in the first weeks of June correlated with his attempted suicide, and whatever opportunities may have existed counted little to him after the bursting of the bubble, reputation, and the fitness that drained from his body under the continued influence of malaria. Wingate recovered, the malaria cooled, and he expressed regret at his actions.³⁵⁰

Upon arriving home for six month's leave in November 1941, Orde Wingate and his wife, Lorna, found their relationship much improved. He had obtained some measure of his ambition by earning the gratitude of the Emperor Haile Selassie during the Abyssinian campaign. He

³⁴⁸ Boustead. Sykes. Letter from Hugh Boustead to Orde Wingate, 31 May 1941. "My dear Orde, I sent you some letters two days ago." OCW Box 2, Folder 5. IWM.

³⁴⁹ This is the time frame that saw the defeat of the commandos in the Aegean Sea, Dudley Clarke's 'A' force, and the creation of David Stirling's Special Air Service. David Stirling deliberately avoided meeting Wingate in this period because he too was "an individualist" and wanted to avoid his influence or his unit being co-opted by Wingate. Sykes, 333. Virginia Cowles, *The Phantom Major : The Story of David Stirling and His Desert Command* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966). Thaddeus Holt, *The Deceivers : Allied Military Deception in the Second World War* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004). Nicholas Rankin, *Churchill's Wizards: The British Genius for Deception 1914-1945* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008).

³⁵⁰ Sykes, 334.

received another bar to his Distinguished Service Order ribbon. Though not quite famous, his return to London reminded him that he still had many friends in high places. Lorna remembered that Wingate, on the whole, was in a better state of mind than before the campaign:

When he came back to me in London in the flat, after [the suicide] episode, it was quite a long while since it had taken place. He'd had a good recovery and a long sea voyage, and he was looking extremely well when he came in through the door. And he was looking wonderfully serene. And he continued in that state of serenity. He had a very hectic three months in London after this ... we had the most exciting time.³⁵¹

Wingate soon secured a physician's note that ensured he could be listed fit for duty.³⁵² But he wanted to avoid a low status assignment, and so instead he based himself out of his London flat and travelled England to promote his recent successes in Abyssinia with well-placed politicians and military officers.³⁵³ Lorna later recalled that together they "had some dramatic times, because he was trying to organize a job for himself. It was at this point in his life that he gathered his civilian friends again ... and he was determined that he was not going to be shunted off to a pool of officers, and then to some minor theater of war".³⁵⁴

If Wingate had not attempted suicide he could have readily enough found work immediately after the campaign in Abyssinia. As it was, the required convalescence took him

³⁵¹ Paterson. Digital file 3, 15:50. Thomas Palaia reminded me that Jonathan Shay draws attention to the possible benefits of longer, delayed journeys home in Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (New York: Scribner, 2002). Shay contrasts this with modern practices which see soldiers flown from a combat zones to "home" in just a few hours' time.

³⁵² Sykes, 340-43. Thomas Palaia reminded me that Jonathan Shay draws attention to the possible benefits of longer, delayed journeys home in Shay.

³⁵³ Paterson. Digital file 3.

³⁵⁴ Ibid. Digital file 3, 24:55.

out of action for months. Soon he begrudged the absence of a high status role with appropriate rank, and he typed a self-addressed memorandum to underline his frustrations. After noting that the staff at the War Office ostensibly responsible for irregular operations failed to recognize him (or to even acknowledge the existence of his campaign) he wrote:

It must be exceptional, even to-day, when an officer who has defeated and destroyed nearly forty thousand enemy troops strongly support[ed] by aircraft and artillery with [only] two thousand troops [of his own], without either aircraft or artillery, and in complete isolation from any other operations, who, as scarcely ever happens in war, has not only been [in] sole command of the forces engaged, but has also planned the whole campaign, organized[,] trained and equipped the troops, and brought the whole to a completely successful conclusions [sic], that such an officer on his arrival home should not even be asked to see the men who are responsible for the army's hitherto not highly successful campaigns; that as soon as they hear he is again fit to fight the only response should be an order to join the regimental depot at Woolwich.³⁵⁵

The memorandum's umbrage shows Wingate's clear taste for peer competition. He insists on the uniqueness of his accomplishment in Abyssinia. He even denigrates the soldiers who served beside him, feeling that their stars must seem dim compared with his own. Since Sandford organized Mission 101, and Boustead organized the Frontier Battalion, Wingate's claims fail to clear the hurdle of honest self-awareness. After typing the memorandum, Major Wingate must have felt a further sting, because he then wrote in the margin:

At this moment few, if any, regular officers of my seniority (18 ½ years service) are not either Lt Colonels or the staff on unit commanders (Lt Cols) or of higher rank still. I am apparently regarded as inferior in ability to the average regular officer.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ OCW Box 6. Folder 2/8/1. "Notes on possible employment."

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

Wingate, throughout 1939 and 1940 had lobbied for an exceptional opportunity, and he achieved it with Gideon Force in 1941, as well as a temporary promotion to colonel. His suicide attempt in July of that year led to his return to London, and the reduction in rank to major. In the pursuit of further honors, he avoided returning to the officer pool to receive an assignment, thereby rejecting the jobs that would have most quickly returned him to higher rank, albeit perhaps without the autonomy and power that he craved. In this context, he narrowly dodged an assignment with Special Operations Executive, and tried unsuccessfully to dodge a new assignment under Wavell (now the Commander-in-Chief in India). Wingate felt he personally had little to offer Burma (or that Burma had little to offer him). He tried to lobby for a meeting with an Air Marshal.³⁵⁷ He met with MP Randolph Churchill (son of the prime minister) and advocated for a 'Tibesti Plan' to operate light infantry formations in the areas of northern Chad and southern Libya inaccessible to tanks.³⁵⁸ But by then the War Office had already committed to sending Wingate to south Asia.

Wingate in Burma, 1942-1944

Wingate flew from London on February 27th, 1942. Almost up until the day he left, he argued with his friend and fellow soldier Derek Tulloch that it would be much better for the British Empire if he found a way back to the Middle East. Tulloch tried to convince Wingate that his fortune might be to "raise and train a vast army of Chinese troops and create havoc amongst the Japanese".³⁵⁹ Havoc was certainly to occur. The Japanese military had attacked

³⁵⁷ Letter from Derek Tulloch to Orde Wingate regarding a possible conference with Air Marshal Sholto Douglass. OCW Box 6. Folder 2/8/1, IWM.

³⁵⁸ Sykes.

³⁵⁹ Tulloch quoted in *ibid.*, 359.

the American fleet at Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941. They had hoped to prevent the American navy from interfering in their goal of creating a 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere', a dream "created by idealists" and "exploited by realists" desperate for better access to the raw materials of war, especially rubber and oil.³⁶⁰ Japanese strategy included the attack and occupation of British Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Dutch East Indies and other resource rich territories.³⁶¹ Hong Kong fell in December. Singapore fell in February of 1942. Burma fell in May. Within months, much of British Asia had collapsed in a rush of disillusionment—and blood. The image of the paternalistic and invincible British Empire was replaced with the image of the 'super Jap'.³⁶² The Japanese conquest fed off of anti-British sentiment throughout the region, and even turned 40,000 captured Indian troops into a detachment of the Japanese army.³⁶³ The Japanese shock troops, rather than liberating British colonies, committed numerous atrocities, and enabled or encouraged wave after wave of ethnic violence. The British never managed to call the bluff of the overstretched Japanese forces, but eastern monsoons accidentally colluded with the Battle of Midway to halt the Japanese expansion—or perhaps more accurately, the British collapse, in south Asia.³⁶⁴ Wingate's original destination, Rangoon, had fallen before he could get there. During a long stopover in

³⁶⁰ John Toland, *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1936-1945* (New York: Modern Library, 1970), 447-48.

³⁶¹ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Second World War: An Illustrated History* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1976). Beevor.

³⁶² Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 143.

³⁶³ Kalyan Kumar Ghosh, *The Indian National Army: Second Front of the Indian Independence Movement* (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1969).

³⁶⁴ The fall of British Asia is best depicted in C. A. Bayly and T. N. Harper, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941-1945* (London: Allen Lane, 2004).

Cairo, Wingate had desperately tried to secure the honors and financial rewards he had promised his soldiers in the Abyssinian campaign.³⁶⁵ Wingate eventually arrived in New Dehli on March 19th.

Wingate went to Wavell for orders. The commander-in-chief in India instructed him to take charge of any remaining 'commando' forces during the withdrawal.³⁶⁶ Wingate, sensing that the hand had already been played, instead began reconnoitering Burma and formulating a novel plan for what came to be known as long-range penetration, wherein units would go far beyond the frontline and attack and disrupt the Japanese 'line-of-communications', that is, disrupt Japanese supply lines and the ability of Japanese commanders to manage their operations.³⁶⁷ The Japanese themselves relied on a similar mobility, and Wingate felt that with British initiative, increasing air superiority, and sympathetic support from indigenous Burmese communities, he might convince his men that they could harass the Japanese in a way similar to how Gideon Force had held down Italian troops in the western Abyssinia. Further, contrary to what Wingate's friend Tulloch had suggested, Wingate insisted that the troops under his command would be British soldiers or colonial troops, and not bother trying to go north and recruit Chinese irregulars. This was a key point for Wingate. He never, unlike his distant cousin, T.E. Lawrence, wanted to step outside the competitive hierarchy of the British military. He explained his preference, in Abyssinia and in Burma, with practical terms, stating that irregulars were expensive and ineffective without a strong example set by professional regulars.³⁶⁸ If

³⁶⁵ Simonds, "Pieces of War."

³⁶⁶ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 147.

³⁶⁷ Royle, 232-36.

³⁶⁸ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 37-38, 41-43. Sykes, 290-93.

Wingate's new plan succeeded, he felt he could prevent the Japanese from taking effective action against other British or Chinese units planning counterattacks into Burma. It would prove, in the popular imagination at least, that the Japanese were not invincible. Wingate managed to send his plan directly to Wavell, and ignored the usual staff channels. Thanks to their personal relationship, Wavell accepted his initiative, but it was much to the chagrin of a creaky and proud Indian Army staff that was jealous of access and supplies. With Wavell's backing Wingate bullied, and mocked, and harassed his peers on the staff in order to get the resources he had imagined for himself. He had not asked for much—just a few thousand soldiers who would otherwise sit idle, but in an environment of scarce materiel and scarce honor, it must have seemed like a lot because the attacks on Wingate's character which resulted from this time period would establish one-half of his reputation up to the present day.³⁶⁹ Wavell's Director of Staff Duties, General S. Woodburn Kirby, was particularly hurt and angered, and when that officer later secured the authority to write the *Official History of History of the War Against Japan*, he devoted more analysis—almost all of it venomous—to Wingate than any other person in the multi-volume set, creating a permanent rift between those who served in the Chindits, and those who did not.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ Mead.

The most even-handed account of the arguments comes from Simon Anglim, "Genius or Madman?," in *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century* (South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword, 2014), 5-17.

³⁷⁰ Kirby, 3.

Soon, however, Wingate's formation shifted from being an auxiliary force to being the only game in town. A poorly equipped British counterattack had failed along the coast.³⁷¹ And Chinese leaders showed no interest in using any of the resources that Americans were pumping into their military in order to aid the British, even if the campaign did have dim hopes of reopening a land route to China.³⁷² Wingate's new force therefore had no counterattack it could support. Still, Wavell and Wingate agreed it should go on ahead, remarkably, despite the risks, as a learning exercise. Ostensibly, they could learn whether or not Wingate's ideas about air supply and hard training could prove effective at sustaining a brigade-sized formation behind enemy lines.³⁷³ With the recent loss of much of his command, Wavell was willing to risk a few thousand more.

Wingate and Wavell had some confidence that their troops could in fact penetrate the Japanese territory without being encircled and annihilated. During the British retreat, the Japanese had continuously outflanked the British. They had relied on scavenging captured supplies instead of carrying much of their own, which freed them (indeed compelled them) to move as quickly as they could, whereas the British, tied to mechanical transport, had limited themselves to the poorly constructed roads.³⁷⁴ Wingate observed, quite simply, that the

³⁷¹ A.P. Wavell, "Field-Marshal Viscount Wavell's Despatch on Operations in the India Command, 1 January 1943 to 20 June 1943," in *The Fall of Burma 1941-1943*, ed. Martin Mace John Grehan (South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword, 2015).

³⁷² Donovan Webster, *The Burma Road : The Epic Story of the China-Burma-India Theater in World War II* (New York Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003).

³⁷³ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 169.

³⁷⁴ Anglim, Simon. 'Major General Orde Wingate's Chindit Operations in World War II: Historical Case Study for the Operating Without A Net Project.'

Japanese army's swift advance left a tremendous amount of thinly held or indefensible territory, and that the Japanese may not be inherently more comfortable in the jungle than British formations with sufficient training. Wingate's own units, being lightly equipped and with virtually no traditional line-of-communication tying them to critical supplies, could prove less vulnerable to Japanese envelopment tactics. He considered Japanese officers unimaginative, and their soldiers to be brave but easily confused. Wingate hoped to paralyze the Japanese military's response to his "strategical" incursion, rendering its fighting power ineffective while he delivered "fatal blows".³⁷⁵

Wingate had wanted to call his formation 'Gideon Force,' as he had in Abyssinia, but instead the staff at India HQ saddled him with operation 'Longcloth', a derogatory snub meant to compare Wingate to Tarzan.³⁷⁶ He later adopted a moniker named after the highly-stylized, lion-like creatures emplaced outside Burmese temples—the *chinthe* leogryphs, which he and his British officers mistook for 'Chindits'. The name eventually stuck, and would, in two years time, become almost synonymous with the war in Burma.³⁷⁷ Language mattered to Wingate. In 1938, his British and Jewish cooperative patrols had become the Special Night Squads. In 1941 a stalling guerrilla movement, Mission 101, gave way Gideon Force. Gideon Force included an auxiliary of 'operational centers' to encourage guerrilla resistance to the Italians. And now, as a brigade commander in Burma in 1943, he broke his battalions into 'columns' and declared them to be wholly novel formations necessary for taking advantage of the technological

³⁷⁵ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 154-55.

Royle, 235.

³⁷⁶ Sykes.

³⁷⁷ During the campaign, the soldiers referred to themselves as "Wingate's Flying Circus." But they gladly adopted the Chindit moniker after discovering its popularity back home.

transformations of modern warfare. Lentaigne, one of his brigade commanders in the second Chindit campaign, dismissed it all as “Chindit bullshit” but Wingate viewed his ever-expanding nomenclature as essential for a reimagining of the war;³⁷⁸ he sought to inspire confidence in his soldiers that his innovations—some useful, some not—would enable them to maintain an aggressive posture against the Japanese, even with limited resources, and survive. For the same reason, Wingate “wrote or drafted all the more important instructions himself,” a remarkable use of his very limited time, but one that created within his soldiers a sense of technical expertise, and technical expertise and personal competence translated into a sense of confidence—even overconfidence—in the overall tactical methods and strategic plans.³⁷⁹

At the beginning of February 1943 Wingate and his 3,000 soldiers crossed the Chidwin river and infiltrated the jungle on foot.³⁸⁰ Mules gallantly carried the radios and heavy weapons. Elephants recruited for a similar task deserted upon the first opportunity. In March, the Chindits destroyed Japanese patrols, cut the railway line, and blew up bridges. Despite a few reversals, casualties were light. Then Wingate and his columns made the fateful choice to cross the wide,

³⁷⁸ Comment from Lentaigne found in Tulloch.

³⁷⁹ Bidwell, 51.

For a study of soldiers using rhetoric to influence strategic decision making in Cold War contexts, see Ronald H. Carpenter, *Rhetoric in Martial Deliberations and Decision Making : Cases and Consequences* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2004).

³⁸⁰ Besides Wingate’s report and Wavell’s despatch, the best narrative comes from Bernard Fergusson, commander of Column Number Five. The first Chindit campaign is also vividly represented in Christopher Sykes’ biography. The journalist Charles Rolo tells a widely circulated version of the events in . A similar take appears in Burchett. Anglim provides a brief but factually accurate rendition of the campaign. Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 169-71. The Chindits also appear in Kirby, 3.

red Irrawaddy river, a move which concentrated their force in an open, hot countryside and with no immediate objective within reach. With Japanese troops moving in, it became almost impossible to properly schedule and intersect with desperately needed airdrops of food. Wingate and his column commanders realized the error, and salvaged the force. The columns crossed the river again, this time often under fire. To move quickly, they slit the throats of their mule transports and abandoned their heavy weapons. Most of the radios were gone. The columns dispersed in order to reduce the costs of any one skirmish with the Japanese forces. Those soldiers too worn out to keep going were abandoned, sometimes in villages, but often in the wilderness while Japanese patrols closed in. The march back decimated the force. By June, it was clear that one out of three soldiers had either died or (rarely) been made prisoner of war. Before the campaign, Wingate had warned the men that he thought only half of them would make it back.³⁸¹ He actually overstated the resultant number of casualties. Still, only six hundred of the returning Chindits were ever declared fit to return to active soldiering.³⁸² A commander who sought to create a new, more efficient method of infantry warfare had conducted a campaign with a survival ratio that compared unfavorably to the worst days of the Battle of the Somme. Wingate, who had read Plato on the march back, took a philosophical approach to the conclusion of his campaign. He imagined writing the obituary for at least one of his favorite officers in the expectation that they might not make it back.³⁸³ He wrote in his subsequent report that "the main value of our operation was plainly demonstrative and experimental. I have learned by experience that one never knows enough and that unless one

³⁸¹ Fergusson.

³⁸² Sykes, 452.

³⁸³ Fergusson, 235.

subjects oneself to acid tests one becomes bogus".³⁸⁴ Still, he suspected it might result in a court martial.³⁸⁵

Wavell had returned to London, and was soon to be installed as viceroy of India. The new commander-in-chief was Claude Auchinleck. Though he agreed with his staff that the casualties were appalling and probably wasteful,³⁸⁶ he nevertheless wanted "publicity as soon as possible for the only British success to date in the Far East, all the more so as there was a recent British reverse to cover at Arakan".³⁸⁷ Auchinleck therefore encouraged the Allied press to visit Imphal (the rallying point for the Chindits) beginning on May 12th, and they were allowed to interview the survivors recuperating in hospital beds. On May 21st the story received permission to print and immediately the campaign became world famous. All of the columns had not yet even returned to India.³⁸⁸ On July 7th the photographs came out, reshaping the image of what it meant to be a 'Special Force' or an elite warrior during the Second World War: beards, coarse uniforms, slouched hats, topees, open neck shirts, and mysterious (yet well publicized) operations behind enemy lines. In a war of tanks, fighter aircraft, and other technologies, the infantry were suddenly sexy. Sykes, in his biography, tried to emphasize that Wingate did not court the press, but after several years of learning to attract attention amongst

³⁸⁴ Royle, 251.

³⁸⁵ Bidwell, 42. Bidwell cites a private communication with Mead, who strenuously defended his deceased friend in Mead.

³⁸⁶ Claude Auchinleck, "Field Marshal Sir Claude J.E. Auchinleck's Despatch on Operations in the Indo-Burma Theatre Based on India, 21 June 1943 to 15 November 1943," in *The Fall of Burma, 1941-1943*, ed. Martin Mace; John Grehan (South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword, 2015).

³⁸⁷ Sykes, 435.

³⁸⁸ The survivors of Column 7 ended up in China in early June, and were then flown back to India.

his peers, it came effortlessly. He coolly suggested his indifference to the attention by declining to acknowledge the presence of a well-known American journalist, and instead arguing with a fellow officer over a recent commentary on the Brontë sisters.³⁸⁹

Wingate's official report had not cleared all the necessary channels before he started distributing it.³⁹⁰ He sent a copy to the Secretary of State for India (and frequent supporter), Leopold Amery. Amery shared the report with the prime minister. The timing proved fortuitous, for at the conclusion of the Trident Conference in May 1943, Churchill found himself frustrated at the lack of success in India, and what he took to be dilatory excuses for avoiding further combat. Churchill immediately suggested making Wingate head of all ground forces in Burma, and then decided to recall Wingate to London and offer him more support—or rather, for Wingate to offer Churchill support in the fast approaching combined chiefs of staff meeting at the Quebec Conference in August 1943.³⁹¹ When Wingate protested that he had not yet seen his wife—they had by this point decided to try and have a child—Churchill offered magnanimously to bring her along on the *H.M.S. Queen Mary*. For Wingate, the journey was excitement and hard work. For his wife, it was loneliness, and crude looks and comments, the latter coming especially coming from Churchill, John Dill, and a few scabrous rakes in uniform.³⁹² Wingate's famous exploits now put him firmly in control of the relationship's direction, regardless of Lorna's personal wealth or intelligence; his fame would decorate and chafe her for the rest of her life. She wanted to be viewed as his armour-bearer, but was more

³⁸⁹ Sykes, 435-7.

³⁹⁰ Sykes, 442.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 444-53.

³⁹² Paterson. Digital file 19, 14:00.

often depicted as a trophy.³⁹³ Lorna saw that Wingate's aching confidence belied an eccentric ruthlessness. He was a fierce and successful competitor for scarce resources and scarce honor. It paid off. Now his superiors wanted to make use of him at the Quebec Conference, not just for his abilities as an officer, but as a first-rate asset in the grinding process of building a coalition for war.

The American chiefs-of-staff expressed nervousness at the fact that the bulk of the Japanese Army was not yet engaged in the war because their soldiers were located in Manchuria and mainland China. They therefore wanted the Burma Road opened in order to funnel more weapons to the Chinese military, whom Joseph Stilwell insisted "were an important military factor" in the defeat of Japan.³⁹⁴ Just when the Americans began pushing for more robust action to help China, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Sir Alan Brooke, pushed back with the suggestion that the Americans ought to hear from an officer who had just returned from that part of the world—Orde Wingate.³⁹⁵ Wingate, ever since his time in Palestine, had shown himself to be able to describe not just his own operations, but what he had learned from them. His lifelong interest in history and international politics helped him place his operations in a wider context, which in turn helped him guess at strategic goals that might be of interest to high ranking leaders. Alan Brooke used Wingate to parry away American attempts to ship materiel to Burma at the expense of the ongoing campaigns against Germany.

³⁹³ Ibid. Digital file 3, 34:45.

³⁹⁴ "Minutes from the Combined Chiefs of Staff Quadrant Conference, 14 August 1943," (Abilene, KS: Eisenhower Presidential Library 1943), 423-29. Webster.

³⁹⁵ "Minutes from the Combined Chiefs of Staff Quadrant Conference, 14 August 1943," 423-29.

The Americans accepted the parry, and insisted that they would back Wingate to the hilt.³⁹⁶ To that end they created two new “provisional” units to support him. The first was Air Commando, which intended to provide enough air support to allow Wingate’s men to fly into the jungle rather than walk.³⁹⁷ The second, under the codename *Galahad*, was a brigade of American volunteers who would receive training as Chindits. They later became known as Merrill’s Marauders.

Wingate’s plan for his next campaign anticipated that in 1944 the Allies would launch a three pronged attack against the Japanese forces in northern Burma.³⁹⁸ One prong would come from China. The second would come from along coast. The third would go eastward (or southeastward) from India. Wingate envisaged that the Japanese defense would depend upon reinforcements and supplies fanning out from the center. Wingate, however, would place a Chindit brigade along each of the supply lines, and he imagined that he would be cutting the spokes on a wheel, and that the Japanese army would collapse under the pressure. As the historian Shelford Bidwell pointed out, the British chiefs of staff accepted Wingate’s detailed plan without yet knowing if the resources were available. Unfortunately, the approaching

³⁹⁶ George C. Marshall, frustrated with what he thought was a British staff attempt to suppress Wingate’s report, ensured an abridged American edition was printed at the U.S. Army Infantry School. It is now the most widely available version of the report. *Long Range Penetration Units*, (Fort Benning, GA: United States Army Infantry School, 1943). Marshal later stated that he “warned everybody that if they took anything from the operations (Stilwell, the British, and the Chinese all wanted some of the stuff I had allotted for Wingate), I would take it back.” Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory, 1943-1945* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), 257.

³⁹⁷ Herbert A. Mason et al., *Operation Thursday : Birth of the Air Commandos* (Washington, D.C.: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1994).

³⁹⁸ Bidwell, 67.

invasion of Normandy meant that no landing craft would arrive in time for an attack along the coasts of Burma. The Chinese leader, Chiang K'ai-shek, sensing an excuse, then tried to cancel his own attack, although the American General Joseph Stilwell eventually compelled him to proceed by threatening to cut off the military supplies coming from the United States.³⁹⁹ Finally, intelligence reports indicated that the Japanese military, partly in response to the chaos induced by the first Chindit campaign, was preparing to attack into India, which caused the newly appointed commander of Fourteenth Army, William Slim, to settle into a defensive position.⁴⁰⁰

Once again, Wingate's plan for a strategic victory began to recede into the distance. On more than one occasion he threatened to resign.⁴⁰¹ At one point, it was because resources promised to him were being held in reserve due to the impending Japanese attacks on India. In another, it was because the world-wide strategy of the Allies did not intend to exploit the efforts of his soldiers in Burma.⁴⁰² One of his subordinates, Bernard Fergusson, had made a strategic follow up a precondition for his continued service, and when he heard that his condition was not going to be met, he too threatened to resign. Wingate, fabricating a plan where none existed, guaranteed Fergusson that his soldiers would be relieved in place before the monsoon.⁴⁰³ Fergusson stepped back in line. Wingate stepped back in line. The Americans, very

³⁹⁹ Tuchman.

⁴⁰⁰ Slim, 285-95.

Frank McLynn, *The Burma Campaign: Disaster into Triumph, 1942-45* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011).

⁴⁰¹ Royle, 292.

⁴⁰² Letter from Lord Louis Mountbatten to Orde Wingate: "My dear Wingate" OCW, Chindit Box 3, ADC Confidential Papers.

⁴⁰³ Bidwell, 74-75.

excited about the adventurous spirit and tactical innovations of the operation, were wholly engaged. Wingate did not resign, but he also wanted to avoid a repeat of Longcloth. He needed objectives he believed were strategic. He improvised, and once again drew upon Biblical imagery, this time for the concept of "Strongholds".⁴⁰⁴

In the second Chindit campaign, the Chindit formations more than trebled in size, but still relied upon a thin line-of-communications, though with the important addition of Strongholds (what soldiers in Vietnam or Afghanistan or Iraq would call Forward Operating Bases). Each Stronghold was to be defensively impregnable, and contain an airfield for resupply, evacuations, and even close air-support aircraft. Artillery would use the Stronghold as a firebase in order to better protect patrols that would cross 'outside the wire' and attack Japanese positions or intercept Japanese movements. If the Japanese attacked, Wingate felt it would be so much the better, as his troops, with the benefit of close air support aircraft, could hold their position. The Stronghold could also serve as an "administrative centre for loyal inhabitants" willing to stand against the Japanese.⁴⁰⁵ Wingate was, without knowing it, inspiring a way of warfare that, with its affordability and promise of security and dependence upon technology, would come to dominate American ground strategy in the 21st century. The attractions today were the attractions then. It allowed for force preservation while ostensibly not surrendering the 'initiative' and enabled the sustainment of the unsustainable—an offensive without enough troops. In fact, Wingate suspected that his Strongholds would prove so attractive to the imagination that once established, his superiors would refuse to relinquish them. Instead, celebrating his success and comparing it to the failures of the British Indian Army bunkered down northwest of the Chidwin river, Wingate anticipated the formation of yet

⁴⁰⁴ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 183-90.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 185.

more long-range penetration units, and the obsolescence of regular infantry formations. He envisioned, in effect, a hop through the jungle from Stronghold to Stronghold, with the 14th Army and inspired Burmese partisans mopping up resistance behind him—all the way to Indochina.⁴⁰⁶ Wingate, fighting the Japanese, a conventional army far from friendly territory, may have succeeded. If he planted airfields “into the guts of the enemy” surely Slim would insist on exploiting the opportunity; or if not Slim then perhaps Mountbatten; or if not Mountbatten, then certainly Churchill; or if not Churchill then the Americans; or if not the Americans then the news media. Predictably, Wingate did not resign.⁴⁰⁷

Wingate’s new unit was called Special Force. His new operation was termed Thursday. He issued his operations orders on February 2nd, 1944. He anticipated a theatre-level victory over the Japanese.⁴⁰⁸ Wingate’s reach for Special Force exceeded the grasp of any explicit planning on the part of his superiors. The inexorable turn of training, logistics, planning and politics compelled the operation onward. Gliders began crashing into jungle, with Chindits crawling out of the wreckage. An entire brigade infiltrated enemy territory moving on foot in single file. On March 13th Wingate declared that “There are now twelve thousand all ranks of

⁴⁰⁶ Letter from Lord Louis Mountbatten to Orde Wingate: “My dear Wingate” OCW, Chindit Box 3, ADC Confidential Papers.

⁴⁰⁷ Wingate had also threatened to resign his commission 1939 to protest the White Paper. Wavell threatened to resign in both the Middle East and in India. Mountbatten later threatened to resign during the Suez Crisis. No one resigned. The threat seems to be used to maintain some autonomy of action within a strict hierarchical organization, and to signal one’s sense of willingness to contribute to the collective good in ways that are personally costly.

⁴⁰⁸ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 194.

Special Force imbedded in the enemy's guts".⁴⁰⁹ Before he could establish all of his Strongholds, however, his transport plane, a B-25 Mitchell bomber, slammed into a remote mountaintop. The crash instantly killed everyone aboard. The date was March 24th, 1944. Wingate was forty years old. His only son was born a few months later. Winston Churchill issued an epitaph in parliament: Wingate "was a man of genius who might well have become a man of destiny".⁴¹⁰

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⁴⁰⁹ "Forecast of possible developments of Special Force by Wingate dated 13 Mar 44." OCW. Chindit Box 3, Folder 18. IWM.

⁴¹⁰ Winston Churchill, "War Situation," House of Commons Debate 02 August 1944 vol 402 cc1459-568. Winston Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, vol. 5, Second World War (London: Houghton Mifflin, 1951; 1986), 498. Sykes, 544-45.

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5. Wingate's Leaders: Trying to escape a "welter of inefficiency and lassitude"

Wingate's leaders, without exception, adopted his 'special force' tactics and strategies under feelings of loss and distress, when pressure tilted the machinery of the mind to greater risk-taking. The decision to adopt Wingate's particular theories and policies usually began as a spontaneous action among high commanders, rather than filtering up from their staff. Wingate's methods themselves were not entirely novel. In the well-supported view of historian Simon Anglim, Wingate adopted British 'small wars' tactics to the available technology—wireless transmission and air supply—and then, in his truly unique way, created units of astonishing pride and ingenuity. Wingate knew how to envisage strategic victories in which his soldiers and leaders wanted to believe.

A few months before the campaign in Abyssinia, Wingate was still a relatively anonymous British Army captain stuck in the middle-parts of fortune. He had received official commendation for conducting joint British and Jewish nighttime raids in Palestine with a unit he called Special Night Squads, but he had also received a reprimand for advocating for pro-Zionist policies in London. In 1940, he pressed for the opportunity to help create a Jewish Legion to support operations in the Middle East, but instead received a staff assignment to an anti-aircraft unit in Sidcup, England. In that same year, Leopold Amery, the newly appointed Secretary of State for India, became the first and most important British politician to intervene in Orde Wingate's career during the Second World War. It was Amery's intervention that enabled the War Office to send Wingate to Abyssinia.

According to Amery, he had met Wingate in Zionist circles through due to their mutual friendship with Dr. Chaim Weizmann, a founding father of Israel. The meeting occurred sometime in the winter of 1939 to 1940. Amery later told Wingate's biographer that he "had made up his mind that Wingate must somehow or other be used to advantage in the war".⁴¹¹ Amery, however, though a member of parliament, thereafter remained out of major office until Churchill became prime minister in May of 1940. He expected to receive a prominent position in Churchill's war cabinet. The role of Secretary of State for India was, to Amery, a "stunning and almost humiliating blow" because in the spring of 1940 India seemed far removed from the war in Europe.⁴¹² Churchill and Amery, much to each other's surprise, having finally come into office, almost immediately began arguing passionately about policy in India. Amery was pragmatic about the rising sentiments surrounding Indian nationalism. Churchill, however, failed to grasp the tentativeness of British rule in India. A Churchill biographer, William Manchester, noted that Churchill later claimed to have almost no memory of his own speeches as pertained to the fall of France and the defense of Britain in 1940, and yet in 1953 Churchill could recall his petty arguments with Amery over India in vivid and passionate detail,⁴¹³ a telling insight that suggests the salience of conflict in coalition building.

The conventional story of Amery's patronage of Wingate describes Amery's intervention as a moment of benevolence, or a moment of kindness towards Wingate, or a savvy

⁴¹¹ Sykes, 223-24.

⁴¹² William Roger Louis, *In the Name of God, Go: Leo Amery and the British Empire in the Age of Churchill* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 123.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 136.

reallocation of a gifted officer from one field of operations to another—pawn becomes queen.⁴¹⁴ But that perspective views the problem only from Wingate's perspective, and ignores the exact context in which Amery made the decision to elevate Wingate's name and plumb for Wingate's advancement. Amery was at the moment under intense pressure from Winston Churchill due to their differing views on how Amery should handle Indian nationalism. By early July 1940, the situation between the two deteriorated to the point that Amery thought it likely that he would have to resign, as Churchill began to probe Amery's every correspondence with the government in India—again this is July 1940, the darkest hour. Consider the costs in time and energy on Churchill's part to intervene so directly in Amery's correspondence. It was in this context that Amery, trying to aid the war, yes, but also perhaps trying to restore his own sense of usefulness, recalled Wingate's name at a meeting of the Middle East Committee of the Cabinet. Amery put it to the cabinet that "in the war with Italy 'the ideal man' to lead insurgent forces from within the Italian African possessions was 'a certain Captain O. C. Wingate.'" The Middle East Committee agreed to forward Captain Wingate's name to General Wavell, commander in the Middle East.⁴¹⁵

High ranking leaders and politicians can, of course, push for a junior's advancement at any time, but given the recent advancements in decision-making psychology,⁴¹⁶ it seems

⁴¹⁴ For an example of the conventional narrative of patronage, see Raymond Callahan's entry on Orde Wingate in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; Callahan credits Wavell with Wingate's deployment. 'Wingate, Orde Charles (1903—1944)', Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011.

⁴¹⁵ Sykes, 230.

⁴¹⁶ McDermott, "Prospect Theory in International Relations: The Iranian Hostage Rescue Mission."; Kahneman and Tversky. Prospect theory argues that when an actor feels they are winning, they will be more cautious, but they will take more risks if they seem to be losing. Political scientists gained valuable

relevant that Amery pushed for Wingate's advancement, and Wingate's use of special forces, in a moment of extreme personal pressure—perhaps even what psychologists refer to as a 'domain of losses.' In the midst of loss, soldiers and statesmen take risks.⁴¹⁷

As essential as Leopold Amery was to Wingate's wartime appointments, it was General Archibald Wavell who put Wingate into the field in Abyssinia. When he decided to resource Wingate, he too was in a moment of professional crisis. Wavell later justified his faith in Wingate by professing that he had "always had a liking for unorthodox soldiers and a leaning towards the unorthodox in war." He had family connections to irregular warfare going back over a hundred years. He viewed his friendship with T.E. Lawrence as "one of my most valued privileges and boasts".⁴¹⁸ Wavell also had a professional interest in the continued importance of the Infantry (he tried to insist on the capital "I"), despite their vulnerability to the "siege" of trench warfare. To make the battlefield more survivable, he pressed for Infantrymen to be more like well-trained and lightly equipped burglars and brawlers, whose expertise resided in enduring (and then intelligently dominating) modern battlefields.⁴¹⁹ But overriding every other interest in 1940 was the fact that Wavell was seriously shorthanded, and receiving "proddings" from a politically vulnerable Churchill to take action on every front imaginable.⁴²⁰ Wingate knew

insight into actor decision making in international relations and political economy by using qualitative methods, testing a laboratory finding (with strong 'internal validity') against a real-world setting (to assess 'external validity').

⁴¹⁷ McDermott, "Prospect Theory in Political Science: Gains and Losses from the First Decade."

⁴¹⁸ Wavell, 56-58. Within his own lifetime, Wavell was a cousin to Major Arthur John Byng Wavell, 1882-1916. Arthur John Byn Wavell, *A Modern Pilgrim in Mecca* (London: Constable & Company Ltd, 1918).

⁴¹⁹ Wavell.

⁴²⁰ Taylor, 84-85. Harold E Raugh, *Wavell in the Middle East, 1939-1941: A Study in Generalship* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2013).

of Wavell's problems, and so when he pitched his guerrilla campaign on December 2nd, 1940, he offered action at a low cost and yet providing high honor. Wingate argued for immediately providing the Emperor Haile Selassie with a few battalions of "brave" and "devoted" regular soldiers. These would move across rough terrain, sliding across the Ethiopian border from the Sudan. They would inspire, by leading from the front, a full-scale revolt against Italian despotism through their devotion to "the cause of [Haile Selassie's] liberties".⁴²¹ As a consequence, Wingate advised them to "withdraw the bulk of British troops from Kenya and the Sudan thus enabling the Middle East Command to sweep the Italians from the whole of North Africa after which they could and would meet the Germans in Greece and the Balkans".⁴²² Liberty, devotion, justice, leverage, and the freeing of resources for other theaters: Wingate moved, at that very meeting, the vaguely defined concept of 'unorthodox forces' from a tactical adjustment to strategic tool. Though the conference received Wingate's performance with a measure of approval and encouragement, Wavell stopped short of withdrawing forces from Kenya and the Sudan.

During the actual campaign, Wingate reported at first to Major-General William Platt and then later received instructions from Major-General Alan Cunningham in the south, and so Wavell, a step above either in the chain-of-command, heard little from Wingate. But with his back against the wall due to developing disasters in Greece and Crete, and setbacks in the Western Desert, Wavell's staff tried to summon Wingate through an intervention with Cunningham. He requested that Cunningham send Wingate to Cairo on May 10, 1941,⁴²³ but Cunningham replied on May 16, 1941 that Wingate was still engaged in combat operations near

⁴²¹ Sykes, 252.

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ National Archives HS 9/1608/8/4A.

Debra Tabor, and asked that he remain until Wingate could hand over his command during a pause in the fighting.⁴²⁴ Wavell immediately replied on May 17, 1941, "Yes retain WINGATE but rely on you send him here as soon as you can release him".⁴²⁵ The short messages do not reveal what job Wavell specifically had in mind for Wingate—operations almost anywhere within the sphere of the Middle East command seem plausible. It seems unlikely that Wingate knew of Wavell's requests, because as early as May 6, 1941, he was speaking to Cunningham and requesting a transfer to the Western Desert as he felt there was no more use for him in Abyssinia; Cunningham simply passed the request along to Platt, and Platt stated he would discuss Wingate's future with Maclean (a political officer) at Khartoum.⁴²⁶ The timing of all this sounds mundane, but it coincided with the period in which Wingate achieved his most decisive military exploits, wherein he outmaneuvered a much larger Italian force and with a ceaseless series of harassing attacks, and blustered his way into forcing the surrender of 10,000 Italian soldiers.⁴²⁷ Wingate clearly wavered between wanting to stay or go in Abyssinia. The Western Desert held more appeal as soon as he heard of the great events going on there, but he bent his back further to the wheel in Abyssinia when he suspected a major victory was imminent. In any event, with the emperor's entrance into Addis Ababa, and Wingate mounted upon a white horse just ahead of the sovereign, Wingate perhaps achieved the sort of victory march that seemed appropriate to him, and he finished his service there giving a toast to the emperor and to Gideon Force that enshrined him in the memory of the Abyssinian elite—indeed, Wingate

⁴²⁴ National Archives HS 9/1608/8/5A.

⁴²⁵ National Archives HS 9/1608/8/6A.

⁴²⁶ National Archives HS 9/1608/8/1A-2A

⁴²⁷ Shirreff, 190-208. Wingate's official biographer, Christopher Sykes, cited this episode as the best example of Wingate's military prowess.

now appears in a mosaic in the city's cathedral.⁴²⁸ Within weeks, physically worn out, and Wavell gone from his post, Wingate would despair and attempt suicide. Platt and Cunningham, contrary to the understanding of Wingate's friends and spouse, wrote about Wingate in glowing terms in their official despatches.⁴²⁹

In 1942, Wavell again requested Wingate's efforts (with another nudge from Amery). The situation was even worse than in 1940. Wavell had just recently been sent to assume the "non-active" role of Commander-in-Chief India because Churchill felt that Wavell was "tired".⁴³⁰ Japan suddenly entered the war, and British prestige suffered its most devastating blows and "greatest capitulation[s]"—the fall of Singapore and Hong Kong, the loss of the *H.M.S. Repulse* and *H.M.S. Prince of Wales* to Japanese aircraft, and of course the embarrassing (though not inept) retreat from Burma—all within a command that Wavell had taken over just a few months before.⁴³¹ A subordinate from that time, Philip Mason, remembers the normally taciturn Wavell pleading with fate: "If I had anything, I'd go for them now. If I had one division fit to fight I would go for them now".⁴³² It was not just a bellicose impulse, for he felt the Japanese must be stretched to the limit. He knew that feeling all too well. While he valued good equipment and

⁴²⁸ Asserate Asfa-Wossen, Peter Lewis, and Thomas Pakenham, *King of Kings : The Triumph and Tragedy of Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia* (2015).

⁴²⁹ Platt, 71-81, 144-45; Alan Cunningham, "First Report by Lieut. Gen. Sir. Alan Cunningham, K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C., on East Africa Force Operations Covering the Period from 1st November 1940 to the Fall of Addis Abeba [Sic], on 5th April, 1941," *ibid.*

⁴³⁰ Louis Allen, *Singapore 1941-1942*, (London: Routledge, 1994; 2013). doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/10.4324/9781315035819>. 201; Taylor, 135.

⁴³¹ Taylor, 135. Allen. 199-201.

⁴³² Philip Mason, Secretary, Chiefs of Staff, India, 1939-43. Interviewed in Brian Lapping and Norma Percy, "Chapter 3: India, the Muslim Card," in *End of Empire, part 1: the war years* (United Kingdom: BBC, 1985).

tactical skill, he felt that “guts” was more important than anything else, and in that sense he felt he had been let down by both his subordinates and his superiors.⁴³³

A measure of the pressure Wavell felt during the war, and especially in the winter of 1942 and 1943, can be clearly ascertained from the last despatch he wrote upon being asked to retire from active service and assume the viceroyalty.⁴³⁴ Near the end of the document, he draws attention to the fact that the despatch “marks the end of my active military career.” He reminds the reader that he directed “some fourteen campaigns”, and that though he admires the “general strategy of the War Cabinet” he has “always been short of troops” though he still felt “up until he arrived in India” that everything possible had still been done to support his efforts. Wavell, though “grateful” for the support and encouragement he previously experienced, has one important exception to make: “During the operations recorded in this despatch I received neither encouragement nor help nor understanding of the difficulties, only criticism for the failure of a bold attempt to engage the enemy with inadequate resources, in hazardous circumstances”.⁴³⁵

With the complete retreat from Burma and the failure of the Arakan landings, Wavell took a risk on Wingate’s Chindits, even when their logical strategic purpose—distracting Japanese forces from the shore—had collapsed. By the time Wingate came out of the jungle in April 1943, Wavell was gone. Wavell perhaps epitomizes the contradictory conclusions that leaders would draw from Wingate’s operations. Though he acknowledged that the mission resulted in “no strategic value”, he argued that the experience proved “invaluable” because the

⁴³³ Allen. 200.

⁴³⁴ Wavell.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 128-29.

Japanese “found no effective means to counter the harassment”.⁴³⁶ The first Chindit campaign resulted in the loss of “one-third of the force”, and so “showed the necessity for a very high standard of training and physical fitness”, not because this alone would result in strategic results, but to increase the survivability of the soldiers. Ergo, in order to undertake missions of no strategic value (and therefore not worthy of the political effort to employ massive overwhelming force) at an acceptable casualty rate, it was necessary to employ the best trained troops. The Chindits could survive, barely. With their small size, they could deploy easily, and with little political interference. The formula had been found which some fifty years later could answer a riddle posed by the American Chief of Staff of the Army, General Eric Shinseki, for an army more “responsive, deployable, agile, versatile, lethal, survivable, and sustainable”.⁴³⁷ It is a formula designed to appeal to soldiers, commanders, and politicians operating with few resources—and perhaps no serious possibility of strategic relief. In environments where strategic success is impossible, leaders clearly prefer tactical success to tactical inaction.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 121. Wavell’s instinct for action may not have been wrong. The Japanese commanders later credited his actions in 1943 with persuading them of the need to attack India’s defenses before the British could deploy further troops against them; this led to the disastrous (for the Japanese) attacks against Imphal and Kohima in 1944.

⁴³⁷ Frank K. Sobchak Joel D. Rayburn, Jeanne F. Godfroy, Matthew D. Morton, James S. Powell, Matthew M. Zais, *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War, Volume 1: Invasion, Insurgency, Civil War, 2003-2006*, ed. Joel D. Rayburn and Frank K. Sobchak, vol. 1 (Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College Press, 2019), 5. Also found in John Sloan Brown, *Kevlar Legions: The Transformation of the United States Army 1989-2005* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2012), 197.

⁴³⁸ A.J.P. Taylor, in his illustrated history of the Second World War, wrote that Churchill’s willingness to ‘waste’ men and materiel for the sake of prestige may have been the characteristic that ‘waits on victory.’ The research in this dissertation has not allowed me to operationalize or test this hypothesis.

Wingate became famous after the campaign, and Churchill whisked Wingate away to promote British heroism, as well as the British commitment to the war against Japan. Wavell, who was soon back in India assuming his new post, commented in his journal: "P.M. is still in Quebec. I hear that Wingate has apparently 'sold himself' well there and his ideas are to have a good run. I expect P.M. will now claim him as his discovery and ignore the fact that I have twice used Wingate in this war for unorthodox campaigns and that but for me he would probably never have been heard of".⁴³⁹ Wavell, a career soldier, felt sidelined from the action, and the note of jealousy in his writing is impossible to miss. He was also once again under tremendous stress with Congress leaders in prison, incidents of scattered rebellion and sabotage, and a famine in Bengal partially wrought by the panic hoarding of foodstuffs in India and the loss of the Burmese rice paddies.⁴⁴⁰

One of the most illuminating perspectives on Wingate's reputational rise (and subsequent fall) comes from Wingate's promotion via Churchill and Alan Brooke, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS). Alan Brooke's powerful position enabled him to become Churchill's principal strategist, and he also formally served as the professional head of the British Army. In March 1942 Alan Brooke despaired of the "unfit" number of British military commanders, many of whom lacked "character, imagination, drive, and power of leadership," a problem he blamed on the terrible loss of young officers in the First World War. Searching for such traits might have conceivably left Alan Brooke open to advancing an officer like

⁴³⁹ August 23, 1943. Archibald Percival Wavell Earl of Wavell and Penderel Moon, *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 15.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

Wingate.⁴⁴¹ On July 25th, 1943, Alan Brooke nevertheless, “had trouble” when Churchill proposed promoting Wingate from being the head of a brigade to the role of Army Commander of Southeast Asia. The prime minister, on the other hand, viewed Wingate as a tremendous corrective to what he viewed as the gross incompetence that led to the collapse of Britain’s empire in the Far East. After Amery sent Wingate’s report on Longcloth to Churchill, the prime minister wrote to his chief military assistant to emphatically state his case for promoting Wingate at the expense of other professional soldiers.

There is no doubt that in the welter of inefficiency and lassitude which has characterised our own operations on the Indian front, this man, his force and his achievements stand out; and no question of seniority must obstruct the advance of real personalities in their proper station in war.⁴⁴²

Churchill further shocked Alan Brooke (earning a triple “!!!”) when he brought Wingate along as a “museum piece” to the Quebec Conference. Churchill intended to show Wingate to the Americans an example of a British hero in the war against Japan.⁴⁴³ Alan Brooke loathed

⁴⁴¹ Alan Brooke’s diary, published in 1957, offers a surprisingly sour outlook on many of the principal characters in the Second World War. It also provides another explicit example of the competition for scarce honor—Alan Brooke chief desire to publish the book came was that he felt that the chiefs-of-staff received far too little credit in Churchill’s own history of the war. Field Marshal Lord Alan Brooke, *War Diaries, 1939-1945* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1957; 2003), 243. Churchill, for his part, seemed to feel that Alan Brooke was equally guilty of inappropriately stealing focus through the publication of his diary. *Ibid.*, xii.

⁴⁴² Prime Minister’s personal minute, General Ismay for COS committee, 24 July 1943, National Archives, PREM 3/143/8. Anakim (Reconquest of Burma) and Connected Operations: Plans for 1944 campaign.

⁴⁴³ Brooke, 433, 36. *The Bengal Famine and the New Viceroyalty, 15 June 1943–31 August 1944*, ed. Nicholas Mansergh and E. W. R. Lumby, vol. 4, *The Transfer of Power 1942–7* (London: H.M.S.O., 1973).

Churchill's tendency towards "purely opportunistic" strategies (which presumably might include gambits such as the Chindits) because Alan Brooke thought of "opportunistic" strategies as "chasing hares", whereas Churchill insisted that long term projects "cripple initiative".⁴⁴⁴ Brooke countered that while long term plans may sometimes "hamper initiative" he nevertheless thought of strategy (and the consequent in-depth planning) as a process of simply knowing what one was stepping into. Yet Alan Brooke "produced Wingate" on multiple occasions at the Quebec Conference and, like Churchill, came to view Wingate as a useful demonstration of the British commitment to the war against Japan, especially showing that "we are in no way neglecting the operations in Burma".⁴⁴⁵ On 13 August 1943, just as the Americans began grasping at a China-oriented, resource-intensive strategy against Japan, Alan Brooke suggested, as an alternative, that the Americans "might wish to hear from Brigadier Wingate his views on the use of long-range penetration groups" which Alan Brooke advertised as "using the Japanese outflanking tactics but whereas the Japanese outflanking movements consisted of four or five mile sweeps, Wingate's used 40 or 50 miles sweeps and used units the size of Brigade groups".⁴⁴⁶ Whereas Churchill understood Wingate in terms of heroics in the face of devastating circumstances and low resources, Alan Brooke understood him as a tool for encouraging American confidence in the Anglo-British process of building a war-winning coalition.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid. , 445.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 438.

⁴⁴⁶ General Sir Alan Brooke quoted in "Minutes from the Combined Chiefs of Staff Quadrant Conference, 14 August 1943," 422-23. Alan Brooke's sales pitch for the Chindits hits the ear almost like a commercial for an American automobile.

Brooke's tone finally shifted back against Wingate when he discovered in March of 1944 that "Wingate is now wiring direct to the PM....It looks as if the strain of operations had sent Wingate off his head".⁴⁴⁷ Brooke's comment ignored the fact that Churchill had expressly given Wingate permission to contact him directly. More than once Brooke felt compelled to give Churchill "a long lecture on the system of the chain of command in the Army!" in the hopes of avoiding disruption.⁴⁴⁸ As in Palestine, so with Burma: Wingate fell out of favor with his fellow soldiers when he disrupted the military's strict hierarchy, a system intended to mitigate intragroup competition. By 1945, perhaps with the recently killed Wingate in mind, Alan Brooke warned Slim away from "prima donna generals" and "film star generals", showing that for all of his concerns for imagination and drive in 1942, by the end of the war the professional head of the army held little room in his heart for any disruptions to the strict order of status.⁴⁴⁹

Why did Wingate's leaders adopt special forces tactics and strategies?

In each instance, Wingate's leaders were suffering tremendous losses when they enabled Wingate's creation of special forces units. Clausewitz's term "friction" – the "accumulation of difficulties" which "no one who has not seen war accurately conceives of"—serves to describe the sense of loss and feeble inertia that occurs in wartime conditions. Chances slipped away, and a sense of failure suffocated the atmosphere. To counter it, the leaders desired a *Sturm und Drang*—a power, a technique, an idea for a chance at moving beyond the friction.⁴⁵⁰ William McRaven, the former American special operations commander,

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 534.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 296.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 716.

⁴⁵⁰ Clausewitz. Book 1, Chapter 7. Translation volunteered by Thomas G. Palaima.

theorized in the 1990s that a “special operation” could provide “relative superiority”—a decisive advantage obtained when a special forces unit leverages its superior training and preparation with an attack on a small fraction of a much larger opposing force, and winning that smaller battle in the face of what seems like—to the untrained eye—overwhelming odds.⁴⁵¹ In Wingate’s campaigns, it was that kind of imagined precision that enabled soldiers to practice superior preparation, which in turn enabled their hopes for a ‘decisive advantage’ that normally only comes from numerical superiority and overwhelming force.⁴⁵² The trouble for Wingate’s leaders—and ultimately for Wingate and his soldiers—was that the absence of a precise sense of purpose at the strategic level. On operation Longcloth and operation Thursday the fact that the leaders—and the soldiers—demanded that the action commence without a good sense of purpose demonstrates the way that the elite feeling—the status inherent in the training—becomes its own purpose. It is a feat of arms independent of a strategic reality. Wingate’s leaders initially adopted special forces tactics when facing a severe deficit of resources—a sense of loss—but their initial commitment to such modes of warfare lacked ‘brakes’.⁴⁵³ The noise and status associated with special forces created a self-perpetuating, semi-independent army whose resourcing could only be stopped with a counterbalancing, massive success on the part of

⁴⁵¹ William H. McRaven and William H. McRaven, *Spec Ops : Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare : Theory and Practice* (New York: Presidio Press, 1996), 5-10.

⁴⁵² The formal description of special forces obtaining a decisive advantage comes from McRaven, 2-3. The straightforward argument for overwhelming force in the context of the Burma campaign can be found in Slim, *Defeat into Victory*.

⁴⁵³ Several political science studies show links between a ‘domain of loss’ and an increase in risk-taking. See McDermott, “Prospect Theory in International Relations: The Iranian Hostage Rescue Mission.” “Prospect Theory in Political Science: Gains and Losses from the First Decade.” Both of McDermott’s studies makes use of the ‘prospect theory’ first proposed by Kahneman and Tversky.

conventional forces.⁴⁵⁴ That success on the part of conventional forces did not occur in Burma until 1945, and so the Chindit's became a 'private army' (an insult Wingate resented and despised), and the 'private army' then became less of an extension of the politics of a nation state than the instrument of private ambition and desire.⁴⁵⁵ That result is not an aberration: it is the default position of organized violence. Having explored, in this section, what those private desires look like at the level of high command, the next section examines the desires of relatively low-ranking officers and soldiers.

⁴⁵⁴ In Abyssinia in 1941, the conventional victories of Platt and Cunningham overwhelmed the 'buzz' surrounding Wingate's simultaneous campaign. In Burma, Slim's more conventional campaign eventually retook Burma in 1945.

⁴⁵⁵ The relative success of the conventional campaign was overshadowed by the use of the atomic bomb 2,700 miles to the east. As a result, Wingate's campaigns remained more prominent in the public's imagination than any other effort.

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6. Wingate's Soldiers: "We need not...suspect ourselves of selfish or interested motives"

Overview

Wingate's officers and soldiers in Palestine, Abyssinia, and Burma often joined his ranks with the intention of participating in violent combat, thereby fulfilling a role to which they had already publically committed through enlistment or commission.⁴⁵⁶ The role-fulfillment sought in Wingate's units spared his soldiers the embarrassment of having a "quiet war", or a war without an "acid test" to reaffirm their value or to prove their worth.⁴⁵⁷ Participating in war often meant rewards. For the Abyssinian irregulars known as 'Patriots' a reward could be access to better weapons, a 'war-wife', and recognition within a complex feudal system.⁴⁵⁸ For the Jewish

⁴⁵⁶ The chapter title quotes Sykes, 386. He in turn is quoting Wingate's 'order of the day' prior to crossing the Chindwin in Burma. 1943.

⁴⁵⁷ Paterson. Digital file 3, 26:00. Lorna describes Wingate's belief that "acid tests" produce efficiency, and that unlike the peacetime navy, the peacetime army had no serious acid tests. Throughout the Second World War, experts propagated a preference for action because "to stagnate in mind or body is to surrender without terms." Charles McMoran Wilson Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage* (London: Constable, 1945), 42. Bourke, 326-28.

⁴⁵⁸ Shirreff's *Bare Feet and Bandoliers*, the best English language history of the Patriots, traces the better access to weapons and feudal power, but entirely skips the war-brides. W.E.D. Allen's *Guerrilla Warfare in*

paramilitaries of the Special Night Squads, the main rewards were a distinguishing, risk-taking role in coalitional violence within a rapidly changing colonial context. For the soldiers belonging to the British Army or its colonial regiments, the rewards included faster promotion, widely recognized badges of honor, or even better equipment and pay, all of which could translate into a higher status both within the hierarchy of the military and back home. No matter the direness of the geostrategic situation, the failure to receive recognition could quickly sap the morale of participants, and undermine their trust in Wingate and in the military establishment—such as occurred, for example, in the immediate aftermath of the campaign in Abyssinia.

A role in violent combat, of course, came with the risk of being maimed or killed, and many of Wingate's soldiers recognized the danger. Despite the inherent risks of irregular warfare, many British soldiers preferred Wingate's methods to conventional operations because his tactics required extensive planning and specialized training, both of which encouraged a sense of competence. Wingate's methods thereby seemed to reduce uncertainty, a cognitive trick that could lead soldiers to actually feeling better prepared and safer—though the evidence suggests that they were in fact in much greater danger than if they had stayed with conventional warfare despite its accompanying stressors of dependence and anonymity. Wingate's strategies and tactics also seemed to offer a way to avoid the "unequal competition between technology and corporeality" found within the sphere of artillery, tanks, and aircraft along the main lines of battle.⁴⁵⁹ Wingate's intrepid (and often deadly) walks through the

Abyssinia largely ignores the interests of Abyssinian irregulars, though stops short of washing the campaign in the same terms as Christine Sandford's nationalistic liberation narrative.

Christine Lush Sandford, *The Lion of Judah Hath Prevailed: Being the Biography of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I* (New York MacMillan, 1955).

⁴⁵⁹ Bourke, 318.

wilderness helped soldiers avoid the “mechanized terror, extreme mobility, vastly more efficient killing machines, omnipresent danger and unpredictability [that] sparked intense panic”.⁴⁶⁰

Though the Second World War is often described in moralistic, patriotic terms, such interests received perhaps less mention than expected in contemporaneous diaries and battle reports, or subsequent personal writings and oral histories of British soldiers. Sources instead reveal a process of soldiers situating themselves amongst their peers through participation in coalitional violence, and then, eventually, in the wider society to which they return.⁴⁶¹

Subsequent generations tend to draw attention to an ancestor’s participation in coalitional violence, thereby honoring their ancestor and signaling their family’s willingness to participate in such ventures.

Independence and Autonomy

The British Army, like any modern military, required an individual’s subordination to a vast organization with a strict hierarchy, and it demanded disciplined service within a context of violence.⁴⁶² Many officers and soldiers described joining Wingate’s units for the relative autonomy that he could offer within the hierarchy of the British military, an autonomy that promised to reduce conflict with peer rivals, shield them from dominant superiors, and enhance their sense of personal autonomy. These individuals tended to be young and unmarried, and

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 319.

⁴⁶¹ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*.

Anglim’s research program revealed just how intensive such positioning could be, and how much intelligence and time military leaders invested in the process of solving tactical and strategic problems.

⁴⁶² Maury D Feld, *The Structure of Violence: Armed Forces as Social Systems*, vol. 10 (Sage Publications, Inc, 1977).

they accepted a trade-off of reduced personal safety for increased autonomy.⁴⁶³ If a soldier pleased Wingate, Wingate often tried to reward them with the familiar tokens of honor and opportunity that British soldiers tended to expect from wartime service, especially when holding a leadership role.

In the Palestine of 1938, the British Army units stamping out Arab resistance often moved in company-sized formations or larger, meaning that a platoon commander might lead twenty to forty men, but he would be under the direct and constant supervision of a higher ranking officer at almost all times. When the Arab Revolt fell into a phase of 'gangster' terrorism rather than large-scale insurgency, the British soldiers faced many of the same frustrations that United States and British forces would face in Afghanistan and Iraq sixty to seventy years later, as they received orders to conduct brutal house-to-house searches, patrol in broad daylight to 'show the flag' along roads that could be mined or watched by snipers, and man checkpoints along high traffic roads while knowing that 'gangsters' could slip through the countryside unmolested in small groups.⁴⁶⁴

Wingate's Special Night Squads offered an altogether different experience for its select officers and NCOs. In an army of slow promotions and limited opportunities for personal initiative, their depictions of their experience show a consistent interest in having more autonomy than before. Lieutenant H.E.N. Bredin, a young officer with a long family history of military service, "reveled" in being a "detached platoon, and up to a point my own master".⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶³ Psychiatric studies throughout the 1940s found that if a soldier felt they could "control the dangers of the battlefield by their own behavior" they were granted a "sense of security that is reasonably good." Bourke, 321-22.

⁴⁶⁴ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 56-59.

⁴⁶⁵ Bredin, *Oral History*.

One of Wingate's favorite young officers, the playboy millionaire Rex King-Clark, also celebrated the independence that the Special Night Squads provided, with Wingate even allowing King-Clark to travel alone on his motorcycle through the countryside (contrary to a British Army policy).⁴⁶⁶ King-Clark imagined Wingate to be "shifty in his convictions"—King-Clark was not a Zionist—but was exhilarated when given the opportunity to join the SNS because he liked that he "worked rather independently" of Wingate or any other officer. Wingate himself also had to seek autonomy for the unit as a whole, and he relished his independence when he obtained it. On June 22nd, 1938, King-Clark noted in his journal that Wingate "returned in great glee" from a meeting with Brigadier John Evetts "as his night squads are now officially blessed and he can do as he wants".⁴⁶⁷

In Abyssinia, Wingate's friend and subordinate Major Anthony "Tony" Simonds wrote pages and pages of correspondence to his commander on captured Italian stationery paper, and the letters provide an effective series of documents for tracing the emotions and motivations for commanding an autonomous 'operational centre' within Gideon Force. The following excerpt conveys Simonds' enthusiasm for commanding his own troops in the field, and the appreciation he had for Wingate as the instrument of that freedom despite Wingate's notoriously rough handling. Indeed it also conveys how independent field work could please the lower-ranking soldiers as well:

Everyone is very cheerful, working hard & keen as mustard. I am happier than I have ever been in the Army & if you could only regard me with some of the affection I actually feel for you, you would be a much more human & likable chap. I am very happy Orde & am doing a job of work [sic]. I regard myself as a genuine friend of yours, &

⁴⁶⁶ Rex King-Clark, "Journal," (London: Imperial War Museum 1938), 9.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 11.

consequently write as a candid friend!!! Cheerio old chap & god bless. Yours very sincerely Tony.⁴⁶⁸

Another letter is even more explicit.

You have trusted me and given me a magnificent job, & I am not going to let you down. It is the chance of my life also for me. I have got what I wanted, an independent command & a boss who has trusted me. Nothing is going to deter me. I am no good as you know, mucking about in a crowd, but as I hope you know, I am not as ghastly in an independent show.⁴⁶⁹

Wingate's operations gave independent-minded soldiers a sense of empowerment, and perhaps a sense of greater significance and less anonymity among the thousands of soldiers a staff officer might see on a daily basis in a conventional unit.⁴⁷⁰ The letters of Simonds demonstrate a soldier happy not only to have a relatively autonomous role within his coalition, but also the liberty to write in an off-handed way to his 'old chap' of a commander, free from the acts of submission and dominance so common in military environments.⁴⁷¹ Another subordinate, with similar nonchalance, wrote to Wingate complaining that it was unbelievable that no spare staff officers were available, and signs off in pencil: "Excuse pencil [...] ink not obtainable (like staff.)".⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁸ Letter from 'Tony' Simonds to Orde Wingate, "Dear old Orde," 12 February 1941. OCW, Box 6, 2/11/3. IWM.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid. 3 March 1941. OCW Box 6, 2/11/3. IWM.

⁴⁷⁰ Wingate was particularly skilled at protecting or shielding "his" soldiers from secondary assignments or tasks. His clerk at Jerusalem H.Q., Ivor Thomas, describes this in his oral history.

⁴⁷¹ In the American military, the custom is to sign off every letter to a superior officer with the letters V/R or "Very respectfully."

⁴⁷² Letter from Lieutenant C.B. Drew to Orde Wingate. OCW Box 6, 2/11/3. IWM.

When that autonomy was threatened, the response could be despairing and vitriolic. Here is Tony Simonds in Abyssinia, writing to Wingate after Brigadier Sandford (the political adviser to the emperor Haile Selassie) suggested that Simonds might be replaced with another officer:

I'll PROMISE you to make a success of this, & NOT to let you down, & I will fight my fucking way through Begheder until either I get to the rendezvous with my command or the whole flaming outfit is dead!!!! Sorry the outburst! But it is my first independent command, I am reveling in it, really have got my confidence back, all my men & officers are working willingly with me & it would break my heart if [Sandford] deprived me of my command. God bless, old Orde, & don't let me lose this job.⁴⁷³

As the excerpt shows, officers could and did argue that they would willingly sacrifice their men's lives in order to maintain their "independent command". In an unpublished memoir written years later, Simonds would begin his narrative of his involvement in the Second World War with a statement about the First, wherein he mourns the loss of his own father who was "murdered in 1916 with 100,000 other Englishmen on the Somme, because of the incompetence of the British Army Generals, who sent the flower of England against barbed wire and machine guns".⁴⁷⁴ In his own situation in 1941, Simonds viewed his willingness to sacrifice his men as a sign of his own devotion, and an ability to suppress fear. It was a sense of active rather than passive: heroic autonomy versus powerless 'automaton'.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷³ Letter from 'Tony' Simonds to Orde Wingate, "Dear old Orde," 13 March 1941. OCW Box 6, 2/11/3. IWM.

⁴⁷⁴ Simonds, "Pieces of War," 191.

⁴⁷⁵ Bourke uses the term 'automaton' to particularly describe the process whereby the anonymous violence and rote duties of trench warfare rob soldiers of their sense of imagination, humanity, and even willingness to live. Bourke, 324-25.

That crucial humanistic autonomy could include costs as well as rewards. In an environment of scarce materiel, such as in Abyssinia in 1941, Wingate and his soldiers accepted that autonomy would be the tradeoff for good logistics—General Wavell’s staff had made it clear to them before they crossed the border that they could expect only minimal support once they left the Sudan.⁴⁷⁶ Still, Wingate’s British volunteers, though engaged in guerrilla warfare and enthralled with the autonomy it provided, were not irregulars, and did not want to be irregulars: they still desired the pay, supply, medical support, and prestige allotted to soldiers in a modern army. The absence of close ties to a regular headquarters therefore resulted in what some of the soldiers considered to be disturbing shortages. Simonds expressed dismay at the poor equipment and the absence of “entitlements” like cigarettes. Many of the supplies they did receive came in worthless quantities. They felt compelled to carry, for example, anti-tank rifles, and yet had no anti-tank rounds. In a moment disturbingly close to Joseph Heller’s World War 2 satire *Catch-22*, they received medical bags stuffed with cotton wool instead of bandages, and simple aspirin instead of morphine and quinine. Their 2 inch mortars—a highly portable indirect fire weapon—could fire nothing but smoke rounds. They had four Lewis machine guns, but no tripods to ensure accurate long-range fire. Simonds’ wireless radio set failed to work—though Simonds appreciated this because GHQ could not interfere or countermand local orders he received from Wingate or actions he took on his own initiative. Simonds’ men received no rations, supplies, or mail over a seven month stretch, and this led, in part, to an attempt on some of his noncommissioned officers to desert him in the field, a group action that would have more easily been deterred within a conventional British unit with conventional access to

⁴⁷⁶ Royle, 179-80. Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 126.

administrative reward and punishment; Simonds, according to his unpublished memoir, resorted to shooting over their heads with a Lewis gun; the soldiers "sheepishly" returned.

The shortages of the campaign continued after its conclusion. When Simonds finally arrived back in Cairo, he discovered that he and several other soldiers had not received any pay or allowances for the past six months.⁴⁷⁷

Wingate, furious, went to General Wavell, who was utterly ashamed; and I was given, as Wingate's [second-in-command] £1,000--out of Wavell's C. In C.'s fund to [sic] distributed amongst survivors. And this worked out that I, having served the longest time up to then in Abyssinia, received £60!! No so much for 7 [months] of hazardous and primitive service.⁴⁷⁸

Simonds' narrative of his commanders' reactions to the perceived mistreatment of soldiers reveals that Simonds accepted it as a given that service with Gideon Force should include the usual degree of remuneration despite the unusual degree of autonomy. Contrary to Marxist accounts of the campaign, participating in irregular warfare did not represent a radical break from the military establishment, but instead a parallel contribution.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁷ Simonds, "Pieces of War," 298-300.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 300.

⁴⁷⁹ *Contra* Burchett, *Wingate's Phantom Army*.

A ROLE IN COALITIONAL ORGANIZED VIOLENCE: "ALL THOSE WORTH THEIR SALT"

Many of Wingate's soldiers sought a role in organized violence, and they anticipated that role being celebrated both within and without the army for serving as the "tip of the spear".⁴⁸⁰ The soldiers knew that participation in violence often correlated with a higher status within the coalition. Joining one of Wingate's units, which were invariably committed to the field, could increase the opportunity to see what soldiers euphemistically called "action". Later in life, in an interesting second act, the soldiers drew attention to their "wartime service", but often minimized their former interest in engaging in violence, and even tried to draw attention to the violence of others as being far worse than their own.

The contrast becomes especially clear with a comparison between published and unpublished sources. In Palestine, Rex King-Clark was openly jealous of the violence of a rival squad leader H.E.N Bredin—but only in his diary. Rex King-Clark excised his desire to kill from both his published memoir and in the oral history archived at the Imperial War Museum.⁴⁸¹ The difference shows a change in attitude toward his violence, but also the duality of the status of 'killer'. As an infantryman, Rex King-Clark's status within his role depended in part upon the use of violence; Bredin's success in killing (not capturing) Arab saboteurs and insurgents led to Bredin becoming the most highly decorated British member of the SNS (barring Wingate himself). In King-Clark's transcribed diary the young officer emphatically says 'goddam them' with envy every time another unit, such as the West Kents, successfully kills a few Arab

⁴⁸⁰ For examples of individuals from disparate cultures using violence (especially coalitional violence) to raise their status, see Kruger and Fitzgerald.

⁴⁸¹ Lieutenant-Colonel R. King-Clark journal assembled 83/10/1 "April 1938 Some experiences in Palestine. ex The Lorettonian."

'gangsters'. His swearing is not expressing anger at the use of British violence, but feelings of his own inadequacy. He states plainly on Wednesday, July 6th of 1938:

I feel very badly today about last night's show. Worse now as Wingate is reported as having—with the R.U.R.'s—killed 9 men out of a gang of 100 he met on the pipe line—and also as he is said to have sent up two red Verrey Light's for assistance, and we didn't see either of them.⁴⁸²

King-Clark's patrol had not been completely uneventful. He had stumbled into a band of 'gangsters.' None of his men were hurt in the ensuing firefight that occurred at nearly point blank range. His men held their ground. The other party fled. This seemingly benign outcome did not assuage his frustration.

Also our private battle--which should have been a chance in a million--failed miserably. I feel I am not the chap for this job....Out tomorrow night again I presume. We must get someone soon. Tomorrow I will get on with training the Ghaffirs.⁴⁸³ I feel very low today.⁴⁸⁴

King-Clark had already apprehended at least one known Arab gangster on 18 June 1938. When he stated that "he must get someone soon," he seemed to mean that he must kill someone soon. His journal is largely filled with predictable references to Biblical geographic landmarks and the weather and the absence of creature comforts. Within that overall sense of normality, King-Clark sought the opportunity to directly take credit for taking human life. SNS operations succeeded in halting the attacks on a nearby oil pipeline, and as an infantry officer he surely knew that even seemingly uneventful patrols would (to use a military euphemism for dominance) deny the gangsters freedom of movement. Nevertheless, during most of his time in

⁴⁸² King-Clark journal. R.U.R. is an acronym for the British military unit 'Royal Ulster Rifles.'

⁴⁸³ Ghaffir: slang for a member of the Jewish Settlement Police.

⁴⁸⁴ King-Clark, 23.

the SNS he viewed his work as a failure, though there is not a shred of evidence that his supervising officer, Orde Wingate, disproved of his performance. In fact, Wingate's wife believed that King-Clark was his favorite soldier, as he enjoyed the younger, wealthier man's playboy attitude and the sly use of personal motorcycles, airplanes, and automobiles.⁴⁸⁵ Yet it was not until King-Clark's final patrol that the young lieutenant felt fulfilled as a leader of infantry, for on that day he and his soldiers raided a village, startled the inhabitants, and killed any villager who grabbed a weapon.⁴⁸⁶ King-Clark then notched his kills onto the buttstock of his weapon.⁴⁸⁷ King-Clark excluded his headhunting "must get someone soon" details from both his Imperial War Museum oral history and his book *Free for a Blast*, perhaps sensing that the emotional, intragroup competition among infantry officers in their early twenties made less sense now that he was a retired, older gentleman.⁴⁸⁸ His change in attitude is reminiscent of the military officers in Jane Austen novels who mysteriously return from violent imperial contexts and then, upon returning to England, say nothing violent whatsoever.⁴⁸⁹ In his oral history (which is actually replicated in his book) King-Clark even goes so far to say that he thinks Wingate was "shifty" and favored the Jews too much and the Arabs not enough—strange sentiments from a soldier who lusted after killing impoverished Arab gangsters. The day after

⁴⁸⁵ Paterson. Digital file 8, 20:00.

⁴⁸⁶ His memoir included newspaper clippings highlighting his unit's accomplishment of "14 GANGSTERS DEAD AND 16 RIFLES [captured]". Reprinted in King-Clark, 199.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 176.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.; Rex King-Clark, *Conrad Wood Interviews Rex King-Clark About the Special Night Squads* (London: Imperial War Museum, 198x).

⁴⁸⁹ Joseph Carroll, "The Extremes of Conflict in Literature: Violence, Homicide, and War," in *The Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Perspectives on Violence, Homicide, and War*, ed. Todd K. Shackelford and Viviana A. Weekes-Shackelford (New York Oxford University Press, 2012).

leaving the SNS, King-Clark rejoined his regular unit. As he drifted into a tired march he stumbled across an Arab peasant on the road and he thoughtlessly lifted his weapon and, "to my everlasting regret", murdered him. His regret did not include any sort of reprimand, even though he had been surrounded by puzzled and even frightened fellow soldiers and officers when the murder took place.⁴⁹⁰ His obituary in 2007 (reprinted online in 2010) explicitly stated that his time with the SNS was "The part of his life as a soldier which he enjoyed most".⁴⁹¹

Similarly, H.E.N. Bredin, who retired a major-general, insisted that "I've seen too much of war to like it," but his obituary in 2005 listed almost nothing besides his (and his ancestors') well-rewarded wartime exploits, leaving only a few spare sentences to describe his gardening habits.⁴⁹² Enough of a record has grown up around Bredin to argue that he was perhaps the most violent of the SNS leaders.⁴⁹³ Lorna Wingate, in her self-recorded audio memoir, related how she and her husband, while dining with members of the Jewish Agency in London in late 1938, received a confidential report from Palestine. Wingate, reading its contents, "turned very pale", for it informed him that Bredin had instructed his British sergeant to gun down his Arab prisoners because "everybody was tired", and they did not want to wait for a transport vehicle. Lorna, with an alliterative twist, adds "Bredin wanted his breakfast" after a long night of

⁴⁹⁰ The quote comes from King-Clark's oral history, and was later transcribed in his memoir *Free for a Blast*. King-Clark, 200-01.

⁴⁹¹ "Soldier, Pilot, Racing Driver, Author," *Helensburg Heritage Trust* (2010), <http://www.helensburgh-heritage.co.uk/index.php/heritage/people/618-soldier-pilot-racing-driver-author>.

Robert A. Bonner, "Museum of the Manchester Regiment Object Focus: The Medals of Lieutenant - Colonel Robert 'Rex' King-Clark," *Tameside Metropolitan Borough*, <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/MuseumsandGalleries/Object-Focus-Rex-King-Clark-s-Medals>.

⁴⁹² "Obituary, Major-General 'Bala' Bredin," *The Telegraph*, 3 Mar 2005 2005.

⁴⁹³ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*.

patrolling.⁴⁹⁴ Years later, however, Wingate was dead and Bredin was not. When interviewed for Brian Horrocks' television series *Men of Action*, Bredin stated that it was Wingate who had murdered prisoners.⁴⁹⁵ Wingate's widow, Lorna, deeply resented Bredin's testimony against her late husband. "But you see wicked people always wish their wickedness onto others. Thieves believe that all the world's a thief. Liars never believe anybody. Bredin was a murderer. And so he accused your father of murder." She dismissed Bredin as probably having "reached some comfortable shelf by now upon which he reposes, waiting for death".⁴⁹⁶ The point here is not whether or not the murders occurred, but rather to underline the ways in which Wingate and his soldiers assigned credit and blame for acts of violence committed by their coalition. Former soldiers seemed eager to convey their participation in violence while also insisting that they were not as violent as others. Years after the Horrocks documentary, Bredin still insisted he was proud to associate himself with the SNS, as he felt that "[we were] presided over by this extraordinary genius, Wingate, who we could all see was an extraordinary man—a human dynamo".⁴⁹⁷

In Abyssinia, the young explorer and Oxford graduate Wilfred Thesiger volunteered for the British Army in hopes of a role in the liberation of Abyssinia, where his father had for years held an important diplomatic post. His background ensured he came to the immediate attention of the Governor-General of the Sudan, Major-General William Platt. The young man was disappointed when Platt ordered him to work alongside conventional forces rather than go

⁴⁹⁴ Paterson. Digital file 8, 17:53.

⁴⁹⁵ Therese Denny, "Major-General Orde Charles Wingate, D.S.O.," in *Men of Action* (London 1959).

⁴⁹⁶ Paterson. Digital file 8, 17:53 to 31:10. Bredin would in fact outlive the younger Lorna by twenty years.

⁴⁹⁷ Bredin, *Oral history*.

immediately into the field. When a Mission 101 staff officer fell sick, however, the short-handed Platt felt compelled to send Thesiger to report to Orde Wingate. Wingate, upon meeting Thesiger, gave a performance that may have been as important to Wingate's hopes in Abyssinia as that which he gave to Wavell, for he immediately launched on a detailed story of his plan to invade the western Abyssinian highlands, and to reach Addis Ababa before the South African Army from Kenya. Wingate made Thesiger uncomfortable with his forwardness, as well as his off-putting habits in dress and behavior. Thesiger, an eccentric Englishman himself, tended not to have patience with other eccentric Englishmen. Yet Thesiger also found Wingate "inspiring," as Wingate's political views concerning Abyssinia corresponded with his own. Further, Wingate seemed to view the Gojjam campaign and the restoration of Haile Selassie as a worthy effort in and of itself, and not just another step in the overall war effort.⁴⁹⁸ "It was obvious as he talked that Wingate never doubted he would be given command of the forthcoming campaign in Gojjam, even though Colonel Sandford, who was organizing Patriot resistance there, and Colonel Boustead [who had recently raised the SDF Frontier Battalion], had both served with distinction in the First World War and were a rank senior to him".⁴⁹⁹ Wingate may have perceived Thesiger's support as crucial to his own ambitions due the young man's past connections to Abyssinia and his known loyalty to Haile Selassie; in any event, Wingate habitually discomfited older officers and kept younger officers "amused and elated".⁵⁰⁰

Thesiger was not widely considered a violent man—unlike T.E. Lawrence or 'Mad' Mike Calvert there are not many testimonies to his violence—yet he proudly noted in his autobiography that when Wingate gave him the opportunity to cut off an Italian retreat, they

⁴⁹⁸ Thesiger, 321.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 319.

⁵⁰⁰ Bidwell, 41.

both grimly celebrated the number of Italian colonials he 'got', an opportunity that Thesiger was grateful to receive. The duality of taking credit for violence in combat again appears in Thesiger's later protestation that Wingate relished combat too much—he twice recalled him smiling grimly at Italian casualties—and yet Wingate declined to carry a weapon in Abyssinia and never even hunted, whereas Thesiger's autobiography nonchalantly lists its author's contributions to hundreds of dead lions, dead game animals, and dead human beings.

The best example of the drive for combat, however, is Hugh Boustead, who desired autonomy, but was willing to walk away from it if Wingate, whom he hated, could ensure him of the opportunity for violence. Boustead had served out a truly incredible career even before the Abyssinian campaign. As a teenaged midshipman with a king's commission, he deserted his assigned ship in 1915 in order to join an infantry unit in South Africa bound for Europe. Then, after service in the trenches as a private soldier, he received a second king's commission to become an infantry officer. Though he never intended to complete a career in the Royal Navy, his desertion (which could have been a death sentence during wartime) was precipitated by four events. First, his commander turned down his proposal for a daring "frogman" style raid on German naval vessel. Second, most of the other midshipmen received assignments posting them to service in dangerous European waters. Third, with other midshipmen he volunteered for a newly formed Royal Navy Air Service, but Boustead was turned down. Fourth, and perhaps most significantly, his brother was killed at Gallipoli in July 1915 (a similar loss propelled T.E. Lawrence into direct combat two years later). Bereft, "unsettled," and even embarrassed, he fled into the ranks of a South African Scottish regiment as a private soldier in order to see "an active front".⁵⁰¹

⁵⁰¹ Boustead, 17-20.

In Boustead's memoir, *The Wind of the Morning*, he never fully reveals what attracted him to combat, but quotes Vera Brittain's depiction of an "enlarged vitality" created through "common peril for a common end" which strikes when young people have "just reached the age when love and friendship and adventure call more persistently than at any other time".⁵⁰² Brittain wrote with a scathing hatred of the war, as it destroyed those closest to her.⁵⁰³ Interestingly, Boustead points out that the same could be said for himself—he seemed to vividly remember everyone who was killed around him. But he underlines the importance of the "enlarged vitality".⁵⁰⁴ It framed his experiences such that little else mattered—he never had a family or 'settled down'—and the pursuit of the "enlarged vitality" enticed Hugh Boustead to fight on the Western front, in Russia, in Turkey, in the Sudan, and (under Wingate) in Abyssinia. In between, he competed in the Olympic Games and attempted Mount Everest. Throughout his life, he pursued approximated bonds of kinship replacing the brother that he had lost, and participated in competitive coalitions deemed honorable within the social group in which he was raised.

Boustead also serves as an example of a soldier drawn to 'unorthodox' infantry work. Like others, he liked the sense of control it gave him, and even the feeling of relative safety. Wingate provided some of this, but even in the First World War Boustead volunteered for the sniper section, and thought that night patrols "beneath stars and star shells" in search of targets were "more exhilarating than the closed walls of the parapet and parados of the fire-

⁵⁰² Ibid., 31-32.

⁵⁰³⁵⁰³ Boustead misquotes Brittain. Her phrases are a "vitalising consciousness" and a "clear-headed vitality", a sensation she receives from "foreign service" and which she chases again and again. Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1933).

⁵⁰⁴ Boustead, 31-32.

trench".⁵⁰⁵ When, in 1916, his battalion received orders to engage in a frontal assault against a German position, he volunteered his sniper platoon to undertake a dangerous (but seemingly less so) mission to cover the battalion's advance. He received a gunshot wound that opened the femoral artery, and he nearly died.⁵⁰⁶ After a convalescence, the army sent him to Western Himalayas to join a new unit, but he could not bear to be there "whilst my friends at home were falling daily at the front," and so he obtained permission to rejoin his old unit in 1918.⁵⁰⁷ After the "stupefaction" of the armistice, he realized he had found the war "greatly stimulating" and volunteered to join the British intervention in the Russian revolution. The key finding revealed in these escapades is that Boustead's primary motivation was often the thrill of a direct role in organized violence and a sense of being elite; he never prioritized political ideology, or even a sharpened sense of nationalism.

Years later, in 1941, he bristled at being under the tactical direction of the much younger Orde Wingate. They had briefly met several times in the past without having formed a definite opinion of one another. Boustead viewed 'Gideon Force' and Wingate's active and imaginative plan as being his best chance for once again seeing "action." Wingate was "going all out to bring the Frontier Battalion into battle, and this conception dominated all else in my mind".⁵⁰⁸ In his memoir, Boustead mocks the "unbecoming" appearance of Emperor Haile Selassie and the "scruffy" dress and "lack of experience" of Wingate.⁵⁰⁹ When Boustead met Wingate in Khartoum, the latter instantly annoyed him by "lying in a cold bath reading *Pride*

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 43-44.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 44.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 142.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 141.

and Prejudice, a suitable title, I felt afterwards, for the conversation that ensued".⁵¹⁰ He loved Wingate's strategic concept (which placed his unit at the tip of the spear), despised Wingate's logistical plan and tactics, and finally, in his memoir, sums up his characterization by insisting that Wingate lacked "common sense," and goes to great pains to point out that Wavell often wrote of that trait's particular importance for successful military leadership.

Boustead, in fact, might have made an obvious choice to lead 'Gideon Force,' rather than Wingate. But Boustead was committed to his Frontier Battalion, which he had raised from scratch, and Wingate had cultivated closer relationships with high ranking British officers. Wingate had also, unlike Boustead, won the trust of the Emperor Haile Selassie. By the end of campaign in Abyssinia, with victory in hand against the Italians, Boustead suddenly flushed with magnanimity towards the younger officer whose strategic plan had seemingly ensured the Frontier Battalion's place of honor in the fighting. Boustead wrote to Wingate a note of congratulations on their recent success, but also an exhortation for further action as Greece and Crete fell to the Nazis, and Rommel threatened the Western Desert:

So do not delay in what is now a minor theatre here, or you will be too late and the hurricane will already have swept over the real Middle East before you reach it. ...
[W]ithout any bouquets I know how much your qualities for war, resolution, boldness and imagination will be needed in the Mediterranean.⁵¹¹

His sudden enthusiasm for Wingate vanished in Cairo. After reading Wingate's unflattering campaign report, Boustead came to Wingate's hospital bed and advised him that the next time

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 142.

⁵¹¹ Letter from Hugh Boustead to Orde Wingate, 31 May 1941. "My dear Orde, I sent you some letters two days ago." OCW Box 2, Folder 5. IWM.

he tried to kill himself, he had better use a gun rather than a knife.⁵¹² Throughout his memoir, Boustead deliberately writes *around* Wingate, avoiding Wingate's more spectacular accomplishments, and wrestling with him, even in death, over the scraps of honor afforded to Gideon Force.

After the campaign in Abyssinia, Boustead's obvious zeal and competence for organized violence (and the instincts which had been kept alive in so many campaigns) resulted, in his words, in several opportunities for further participation in the war with Germany "in Yugoslavia or Jordan or Sicily or the Levant", but he "turned them down" because he wanted the autonomy of an independent command.⁵¹³ This left him somewhat stranded along violent colonial outposts in the Sudan, engaged in a ceaseless struggle against "brigands." He does not state, or try to explain, if he found this kind of operation any more or less satisfying than operating against the Italian Fascists. It provided enough of an 'enlarged vitality' that he seems not to have cared.

Participation in organized violence was also a key motivating factor in Burma. When the young staff officer Bernard Fergusson told General Archibald Wavell that he was considering joining the Chindits, Wavell replied that if Fergusson were married, he would tell him to remain behind in India, but that if he were a bachelor he would tell him to go with Wingate. Since it was the latter, Fergusson went. And indeed, after years of inglorious staff work, Fergusson's involvement elevated his status and sky-rocketed him to fame. When Fergusson decided to follow Wingate, the Chindit campaign seemed "the only prospect for action" in 1943, and certainly, for Fergusson, the only opportunity for command.⁵¹⁴ The elder Wavell felt that in

⁵¹² Sykes, 334-35. And in Thesiger.

⁵¹³ Boustead, 172-73.

⁵¹⁴ Latimer, 155.

undertaking the exercise, Fergusson had taken the opportunity "to prove himself a fit leader".⁵¹⁵ Wavell then evoked tribal imagery to justify Fergusson's service under Wingate: "all those worth their salt would rather attempt hard tasks under a great man than serve at ease under a lesser".⁵¹⁶ One year later, Wavell's own son, Archie J. Wavell, volunteered for the second Chindit campaign for similar reasons, and not without cost—he lost his left hand in action against the Japanese.⁵¹⁷ The brutal challenge of Wingate's Operation Thursday became an end on its own terms, and needed no justification in terms of nationalism once the strategic objective evaporated, instead "the experience to be gained would be invaluable and well worth the risk".⁵¹⁸ Despite all the technology brought to bear, modern soldiering remains elemental in its conduct: Fergusson's social and professional status translated into a place of honor within a hierarchical coalition built for organized violence. An explicit sense of patriotism only begins to appear in Fergusson's book on page 59, when a discussion with other Scottish soldiers evokes pastoral memories, allowing Fergusson to return "to [his] column with a renewed idea of what I was going to war for." Nationalism, at least for the soldiers joining Special Force, was the dessert wine, and not the main course; the wider context of intergroup violence enabled varying strategies of intragroup competition, and it was the latter that occupied their passions. Fergusson's writing reveals a mix of attractions and interests within the Special Force lifestyle. He discovered happiness, not just in the independence of command (autonomy and hierarchical status), but in brotherhood and camaraderie (recreated kinship to increase collective action), a focused and unique mission that required difficult (and therefore rewarding) training. "I was

⁵¹⁵ Field-Marshal A.P. Wavell's forward found in Fergusson, 12.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵¹⁷ Sykes, 483.

⁵¹⁸ Fergusson, 13.

getting to know people, and becoming a member of a very happy family, pledged to do great things".⁵¹⁹ He earned approbation from Wavell, his long time mentor, respect from his peers, and obedience from his soldiers. It was a life-changing opportunity for someone who had shuffled from one "snob post" (Wavell's term) or staff job for years.⁵²⁰ When Wavell inspected Fergusson's Special Force column immediately prior to Operation Thursday, Fergusson described it as "one of the proudest days in my life".⁵²¹ Years later, Bidwell reported that Fergusson still remembered his "paladin", Orde Wingate, as "a man who had enhanced his life by giving him the opportunity to take part in two searing but splendid adventures".⁵²²

Another Fergusson story illustrates the desire of others to join such units, the life and death stakes of the decision, and its disconnect from larger war aims. Fergusson, wanting another officer on his staff prior to operation Longcloth, stumbled across a man named Duncan Menzies. They shared a prior acquaintance from a "cock up" while holding a tenuous defensive line in Tobruk (Libya) against the Germans. It had been an instance of "regular warfare", and a strategically important job, but little glory and much embarrassment. Menzies' decision to serve in Fergusson's unit should not be taken for granted—Fergusson, in his writing, makes it apparent that he feared that Menzies would decline to join the march. There were—objectively—good reasons not to go. On the one hand, they did have a prior association, and the kinship bonds of wartime brotherhood are strong, but on the other hand Menzies had that same bond (if not stronger) with their "regular" regiment, the Black Watch. In the end, to recruit Menzies for the Chindits, all Fergusson had to do was to tell Menzies "very little" of the

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., 28.

⁵²⁰ Ibid., 12.

⁵²¹ Ibid., 57.

⁵²² Bidwell, 141.

mission, and then warn him that the “chances of coming back were about even money”.⁵²³ Menzies nevertheless “jumped at it”, and though Fergusson gave him another few hours to think about it he remained firmly attached. A fifty-percent chance of getting killed would have put the unit among the highest rates of death in the war. In the event, it proved slightly better than that, and Fergusson obtained a 65 percent survival rate for his column. But Fergusson’s off-the-cuff estimate gives the sense of how soldiers calculated the risks and rewards of entering Wingate’s Special Force.

Prior to Longcloth, Archibald Wavell, the field-marshal who had empowered Wingate, informed the Chindits that an offensive along the coast—to which the Chindits were merely the supporting effort—had been cancelled and withdrawn. Fergusson recalled the moment: “This was calamitous. True our whole object was to precede and aid in an offensive; this was the purpose of our existence. But Wingate still had to prove his case [...]”.⁵²⁴ The worthy purpose of the Chindits, at this point, had become to prove the worthiness of the Chindits. It was a circular argument moving in the fear that Clausewitz’s ‘friction’ would rob them of the opportunity for glory. Cut free from strategic necessity, the desire for the continuance of the operation nevertheless seemed unanimous. “I can only say,” Fergusson remembered, “that every column commander was in agreement; so would have been every officer had they been consulted; and not one of us, even in the life of the after events, has ever regretted the decision. So it was on”.⁵²⁵

Despite Operation Longcloth’s detachment from strategy, the soldiers maintained the pretensions of a higher cause throughout the campaign. Wingate encouraged it. It was one of

⁵²³Fergusson, 35-36.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., 56.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 56-57.

his specialties. When Fergusson, eager for a supply drop, signaled to Wingate Psalm 22 Verse 17 ("I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me"), Wingate signaled back "It is expedient that one should die for the people".⁵²⁶ Fergusson, despite Wingate's black humor, never let go of the idea of the Chindits as a higher cause—and he became, halfway through the mission, more determined than ever to impress Wavell. In the midst of the Chindits' most perilous hour, Fergusson found his column facing two wide river crossings within range of Japanese patrols. They had hundreds of miles of marching to go, and little hope of additional supply drops, and the Japanese forces within the area were maneuvering (unsuccessfully) to destroy the Chindits. Still, Fergusson took the time to insist that his clerk take down a list of his officers deserving medals (honor and status always a prominent theme), and then insisted to two of his junior officers that if he were killed they should force a private audience with Field-Marshal Wavell in order to list Fergusson's "irrefutable proof" that long-range penetration campaigns, including the one that they were on, were worthwhile, and that he felt that would remain the case even if the present operation ended in disaster.⁵²⁷

Fergusson in fact survived the campaign, but Duncan Menzies, the man Fergusson personally recruited, was among those who died. The Japanese, to Fergusson's despair, had captured Menzies alongside another soldier. Their captors shaved their heads and beards, and then "used him [and the other soldier] for bayonet practice" before shooting Menzies in the

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 127.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 146. Fergusson's argument seems to offer evidence (if not 'irrefutable proof') for 'cognitive consistency' in the face of disaster. Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails; a Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Group That Predicted the Destruction of the World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

stomach.⁵²⁸ The Chindits managed to find him, still alive, tied to the tree. Another officer then chose to administer a lethal dose of morphia to Menzies (no sooner had the officer administered the drug than he was shot by a sniper and instantly killed). Fergusson posthumously honored Menzies with a personal dedication in *Beyond the Chindwin*, and Menzies' surviving relatives have continued to receive recognition for the sacrifice of their uncle as recently as 2014 in an article entitled "In the Footsteps of a Hero".⁵²⁹ Menzies' story of risk-taking and Fergusson's insistence on honoring his life and death are but one sample of several thousand from the Chindit campaigns. Despite the risks involved, other Chindit officers found it similarly easy to attract soldiers to their operations. Michael Calvert, for example, fleshed out his command of 77 Brigade in operation *Thursday* with a multiethnic band of refugee Home Guard from Hong Kong who volunteered after years of "feeling disconsolate and forgotten".⁵³⁰ Though Wingate insisted that his leaders should be prepared to accept high casualties, the Chindits were not a cult of death as they headed into the jungle—I have not found any instance in which someone describes anyone else as having a desire to die in Burma.⁵³¹ Indeed, the British Army, for many

⁵²⁸ The story comes from Fergusson, but its repetition in WW2 People's War is significant, as it shows the honor and macabre significance British society assigned to the Chindits. These articles were written by the public on a voluntary basis in order to "honor the legacy" of British soldiers during the Second World War. Alasdair Sutherland, "A Highland Chindit " (2014), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/68/a2639568.shtml>.

⁵²⁹ Sian Powell, "In the Footsteps of a Hero," *SA Weekend* (2014), <http://www.sianpowell.com/in-the-footsteps-of-a-hero.html>.

⁵³⁰ Sykes, 483.

⁵³¹ There was no obvious Chindit equivalent to Yeats' *An Irish Airman Foresees His Death*; no one determined that "in balance with this life, this death." The Chindits wanted to live.

years, avoided honoring deceased soldiers with its highest forms of honor.⁵³² Instead, Wingate had trained them up to feel as though they would be the one to survive, even if others failed, as long as they followed his exacting tactical procedures and high standards for individual skills.

THE DEMAND FOR REWARDS

Though Wingate's soldiers did not bluntly demand awards it was clear that they desired, appreciated, and even expected them. Bredin recalled his British SNS soldiers getting paid an extra shilling a day—no small amount in a peacetime army that at times demanded soldiers police their own brass after firefights.⁵³³ Wingate helped ensure that Brigadier Evetts put Bredin in to receive a bar to his Military Cross, as well as a mention in despatches.⁵³⁴ Rex King-Clark received less recognition from official channels than Bredin, but still earned the Meritorious Cross. King-Clark also stated that the SNS received much better food and living conditions than in conventional service elsewhere in Palestine. The SNS took up residency in various kibbutzim and lived off of the food of Jewish Zionists rather than regular British Army rations. Many years later King-Clark received special recognition from the state of Israel for his participation in the SNS.⁵³⁵

In Abyssinia, the autonomy of Gideon Force led to a shortage of supplies, but certain freedoms in other areas as well. Simonds, in his supply requests, felt compelled to ask for contraceptives, as four of his sergeants "had contracted some form of V.D., very prevalent amongst the village women." The contraceptive arrived in a "longed-for air-drop." The air crew

⁵³² Stuart Ryder, "The Evolution of Posthumous Gallantry Awards," *The RUSI Journal* 144, no. 1 (1999).

⁵³³ Lane; Bredin.

⁵³⁴ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*.

⁵³⁵ "Soldier, Pilot, Racing Driver, Author".

tossed the supplies out of the plane, along with bundles of cash for local purchases. The contraceptives came attached to a long streamer that read "with the compliments of the Royal Air Force".⁵³⁶

Simonds expected rewards after the campaign as well, as indicated with his careful tracking of Wingate's movements after the conclusion of Gideon Force. Back in Cairo, Wingate "was dosing himself heavily, and ill-advisedly, to combat the fever and malaria from which he was suffering. He would not report sick.... If an Officer was admitted to hospital for more than three weeks, he lost whatever temporary rank he was holding.... He felt that he could get more justice for his men, and recognition of their achievements--as a Colonel--not a mere Major".⁵³⁷ Wingate's suicide attempt came while he was struggling to obtain the "justice" and "recognition" that Simonds clearly desired. Simonds saw Wingate one final time in 1942, on the latter's way to GHQ India. Wingate spent "a few hectic days at GHQ M.E. trying to right the wrongs and neglect of the men who had fought under him at Abyssinia." Wingate then resubmitted the paperwork for a Simonds DSO (he received another mention in despatches instead) and a reward for Simonds' secretary, Abram Akavia, who eventually received forty pounds in 1944.⁵³⁸

George Stanley Grey, an officer who served under Orde Wingate, commented on the use of 'war-brides' in Abyssinia.⁵³⁹ The Ethiopian leadership expected and encouraged Grey's Ethiopian soldiers to bring along women on the campaign. "During the war," Grey remembered,

⁵³⁶ Simonds, "Pieces of War," 278.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 300-01.

⁵³⁸ Ibid., 9-10. Akavia.

⁵³⁹ George Stanley interviewed by Conrad Wood Grey, *Oral History 7390 with George Stanley Grey* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1984).

“there was a law that you could take upon yourself a woman for the duration. And she went along with you as your wife if you had to leave yours behind (that sort of thing) and at the end of the war [Grey claps his hands] they split up and that was it.” Women were also frequently offered to the British. He remembered Brigadier Sandford rejecting one such offer with the phrase “no, this is not our way.” Reflecting on the experience (and reflexively racist), Grey attributed the Ethiopian treatment of women as “rather lax in morals.” But it was, perhaps, their way of paying their ‘Patriot’ soldiers while on campaign, and keeping the troops in line—an especially challenging task when many of the Patriots had previously bowed to the Italian occupation. In Operation Thursday, Wingate insisted to his new Chindit formations that he had secured them the “best equipment and the best of everything”, including a newly invented flame thrower and expensive American field rations.⁵⁴⁰

IDEALISM

Autonomy, status, an instrumental role in violence, and additional rewards—was there room for ideals in Wingate’s forces? The answer clearly must be yes, but the ideals did not strictly align with the propaganda reels of the British or American public. Wingate not only was able to sell his units as a unique soldiering opportunity, but also as the chance to do the most good possible (as a British soldier at least) in an environment of colonial complexities. Many of his men openly wore their ideals on their sleeves: William Thesiger and Dan Sandford wanted to liberate a country they loved from the tyranny of the Italian occupiers, and restore Haile Selassie to the throne. But then again, their own personal status and identity were inextricably to Haile Selassie’s fortunes; Thesiger’s relationship with the emperor had afforded him invitations to high status train journeys across Africa with the future king of England,

⁵⁴⁰ Bidwell.

extraordinary hunting opportunities, and eventually adventures that established him as one of the preeminent explorers of the mid-Twentieth century. Dan Sandford held property rights within the territory held by the Italians, and had lived there for years with his family before the occupation, and had even been appointed governor of an Abyssinian province. And Wingate himself first insisted he would restore the Emperor of Abyssinia to the throne as a boast to his young wife, to whom he had sold himself as an adventurer and great soldier, and yet at the time of the boast he was a captain serving as an adjunct to a territorial regiment, unable to even qualify for a position at the staff college.⁵⁴¹

Higher ideals, in war, are likely to get torn apart. Robert C Glanville, a veteran of Gideon Force, felt depressed at the end of the campaign in 1941, as it looked to him that the Abyssinian's were "going back to the middle ages...we'd freed them from the yoke of the Italians and brought them back to the yoke of Ethiopians".⁵⁴² It was an unfair charge against the Abyssinians. The Italians infamously used poison gas on resistant Ethiopians and ruthlessly executed the children and fathers of resisters.⁵⁴³ The Abyssinians, on the other hand, helped the British protect the Italian prisoners of war, and avoided retaliatory attacks.⁵⁴⁴ But Glanville's comment underlines the quick deterioration of ideals under the pressure of a military campaign.

Accounts from Chindit spouses are rare, but Lorna's audio memoir shows that at least some women encouraged the participation of men in Special Force. In 1943, Wingate felt he would be unable to gather a first-class staff in London before returning to India, as he had only

⁵⁴¹ Hay.

⁵⁴² Robert C. interviewed by Conrad Wood Glanville, *Oral History Interview with Colonel Robert C. Glanville* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1979).

⁵⁴³ Shirreff.

⁵⁴⁴ Cunningham.

a few precious weeks to gather a cadre of officers to help guide his operation and fight for the interests of his new command.⁵⁴⁵ His wife, Lorna, recommended that he ask Derek Tulloch, his friend from his first years of soldiering. Tulloch had been to staff college, and had been serving in various staff positions since the war began. Crucially, Wingate and Lorna agreed that “[Derek] was capable of holding the interior fire of a superior mind”.⁵⁴⁶ Wingate made the attempt, but Derek rebuffed him, believing that the job was beyond him. Lorna considered that Derek Tulloch “was used to being led by a strong woman” (his wife) and so Lorna cornered him alone, and coaxed and bullied him into finally agreeing, much to Wingate’s appreciation. The story would end there, and we would not have Lorna’s audio memoir, had Tulloch not cast Lorna’s relationship with her late husband in an unflattering light in his memoir *Orde Wingate in Peace and War*. Tulloch subtly hinted at the “alien” and “violent” relationship between Orde and Lorna. This naturally angered Lorna, and led her to record that while she admired Tulloch’s “marvelous” book for its depiction of Wingate’s martial action, she derided his understanding of Wingate’s *marital* action, and informed her son (who was in the army at this point) that Derek had been “guilty of the most appalling crime—there’s no other word for it.” His crime, Lorna avers, was “going to pieces” after Wingate’s death, and refusing to take command of the force, as per Wingate’s instructions. “[Derek] is quite hollow inside...in fact, he is a moral coward”.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁵ In the event, a well-trained division was ‘broken up’ in order to constitute the additional Chindit units, and Major-General Symes, the former division commander, kept his staff together and led them in the service of the younger Wingate’s command. Symes resigned, however, when after Wingate’s death Slim did not ask him to assume command of the Chindits, but instead elevated Brigadier Lentaigne who—like Slim—came up as a Ghurka officer. He sat out the rest of the war in England. Bidwell.

⁵⁴⁶ Paterson. Digital file 1, 30:00 to 39:50.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

Lorna's fascinating influence on the Chindit campaign, even if an unusually vivid example, still demonstrates that even in the sharply gendered militaries of the Second World War, women could and did play a role in shaping the opportunities for high status war jobs, and then competing for scarce honor years after the end of the war. In 1944 Lorna recruited Tulloch to Wingate's staff. In 1973 she castigated him for dishonoring her relationship with her deceased husband. As political scientist Rose McDermott recently reminded me, coalition building and intragroup competition really are flip sides of the same coin.

SCARCE HONOR: COMPETITION WITHIN A 'BROTHERHOOD'

If honor is perceived as an unlimited and boundless resource as the air then we should expect to see boundless magnanimity, and virtually no discussion of it because it would be as free and easy as breathing, and there would be a ready and mild acceptance of both blame and credit, and a disinterested acceptance of whatever role one is asked to play in the nationalistic struggle for survival. If honor is scarce, then we should expect to see intense rivalries, calumny and doubt heaped upon soldiers, much effort spent on adjudicating or deflecting blame, and intense competition for command and credit, only mitigated by the use of strict hierarchy and a kinship enforced through discipline. The former world is almost unimaginable, and the latter is the one in which we live.

In a wartime context, the word enemy could often apply to coalitional rivals rather than armed opponents. Military veteran and historian Shelford Bidwell, for example, wrote that Wingate's success at the Quadrant Conference in 1943 "was a considerable personal victory over his enemies in India".⁵⁴⁸ The slide between rival and enemy was often furious and swift. When the 'official mind' of the War Office was asked to produce a biographical sketch of

⁵⁴⁸ Bidwell, 68.

Wingate for the *Official History of the War Against Japan*, a Miss. R.J.F. Hughes included the following description:

Forcefulness and determination made Wingate many enemies. His consuming fire of earnestness was such that, in a theatre where resources were extremely limited, he had energy only to grab tools to get on with the job and none to conciliate his professional rivals who found themselves the beaten bidders.⁵⁴⁹

The stakes of intragroup competition could escalate quickly, and such escalations were so crucial and common in coalition building that later writers depicted them with metaphors of violence. Here Bidwell describes the interaction between the professional heads of the British military and the regional headquarters back in India after the conclusion of the first Chindit campaign in 1943:

When the British chiefs-of-staff informed the commander-in-chief in Delhi [Auchinleck] of the decisions taken at Quebec and the man-power requirements to be met to make Wingate's operational rôle possible there was great consternation A furious bombardment and counter-bombardment took place between the chiefs-of-staff and the staff in Delhi, with top-secret signals for missiles. Wingate himself had the satisfaction of drafting the answers from the chiefs-of-staff, who had no intention of backing down or modifying decisions taken jointly with their American colleagues.⁵⁵⁰

Auchinleck, whose press campaign had elevated Wingate to the status of national hero, resented that the war cabinet ignored his concerns over expanding the Chindits. He argued that the "L.R.P. Groups...are unjustifiably costly against a first class enemy and achieve no strategic

⁵⁴⁹ Found in Royle, 271. 'Wingate as a Man and a Commander', memorandum by Miss R. J. F. Hughes, undated, CAB 101/202. Kirby, 3, 219-22.

⁵⁵⁰ Bidwell, 68-69.

object".⁵⁵¹ While the bitterness between Wingate and some of the staff officers in India proved exceptional, rivalries between soldiers occurred often enough that Bidwell, a military veteran, proffered advice to his readers:

Inevitably there was friction [while preparing for operation *Thursday*]; there always is in preparing any big operation. To overcome it an emollient approach works better than a rough one. To yield a little is good tactics, as scoring off an opponent only tends to establish him as an enemy.⁵⁵²

Even after the commitment of resources, the competition continued to manifest in many ways, subtle and strong. Wingate's death in March 1944, for example, precipitated sudden stabs of internecine rivalry to take his place as the commander of Operation Thursday. When one officer, Major-General Symes, realized he would not receive the command, Bidwell relates that Symes "understandably asked to be relieved of his post of deputy commander" and to return to London.⁵⁵³ A fellow general, like Bidwell, finds it easily *understandable* that an officer could quit his post in an undermanned theater of war after helping to send 14,000 men into the jungle behind enemy lines whilst in the midst of a historic global conflict in which the empire to which they both belonged was falling apart. It is not understandable from the perspective of ethno-centric nationalism, or Marxism, or international order. It is very understandable through the narrow frame of professional competition within an emotionally charged environment of hierarchy, prestige, and dominance.

Within the Chindit formations themselves, the competition continued as credit and blame were assigned in at least five different ways. First, there came the direct feedback in

⁵⁵¹ Auchinleck, 169.

⁵⁵² Bidwell, 55.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., 159-62.

training and on the battlefield: Fergusson called out one "young lad" as "always in trouble and always lazy".⁵⁵⁴ Another becomes "the finest regimental officer I have ever met".⁵⁵⁵ The informal accounts created a local reputation for each soldier within the immediate hierarchy. Second, there were formal medals and despatches that kept a cumulative record to honor wartime achievement. Third, obituaries and private memorials honored soldiers lives within a broader society. Just as Americans now signal the sacrifice their children have made with gold star banners, so too did the British units use memorials, sometimes spontaneous and sometimes formal, to honor the fallen. Wingate, upon seeing that Fergusson had, contrary to report, survived the return journey to India in 1943, reproached his subordinate for wasting "the obituary notice which he had been composing all the way back." Fergusson commented "I should have liked to have seen it".⁵⁵⁶ After Wingate's own death, Lorna Wingate commemorated her late husband with a service organized by Chaim Weizmann. Fourth, there were (and are) social clubs and "associations" of veterans to promote the group's achievements and sustain their place in the wartime hierarchy, and these were often responsible for the statues and awards and decorative errata after the conflict. Fifth, war writing provided a reassessment of the written wartime record, encouraged a pursuit of new types of honor (Fergusson and Calvert both had their work described as "classics"), and continued the intragroup conflict.

⁵⁵⁴ Fergusson, 29.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., 31.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., 238.

“So well thy words become thee as thy wounds; They smack of honour both”

War writing, the fifth category, accorded the Chindits exceptional fame. Wingate's path through life was that of a professional soldier;⁵⁵⁷ the institutions of the British Army shaped his preferences such that his obsession with soldiering and a soldier's status dominated his mind, and he only learned to work with the media after Operation Longcloth, and then it certainly required the initiative of others—notably Wavell and Auchinleck—as much his own. After Abyssinia he turned down at least two opportunities to publish “his ideas” or memoir (though he preserved the invitations from W.E.D. Allen and the publishers at Jonathan Cape).⁵⁵⁸ He was not a Stilwell, who dragged a dozen strong press corps to battles not yet won, nor a Churchill who viewed the pen as his most powerful weapon. For Wingate's soldiers, the first wave of attention came from journalistic accounts funneled through public affairs. The second came through books celebrating the Chindit campaigns as a stunning feat of arms, technological breakthrough and heroic victory against the Japanese in a part of the world known for British “lassitude” and “waste”. Fergusson's skill in observation enabled a post-War prolixity that secured him a third-place finish among famous Chindit officers behind Wingate and “Mad” Mike Calvert. In the public eye, he might have been the best ‘liked’ for his ability to recognize, restate, and parry writers who denigrated Wingate's Chindits. He also shows a magnanimity in

⁵⁵⁷ The heading is a quote from King Duncan in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and it comes at the conclusion of a battle. In the next act, incidentally, the king's best soldier, Macbeth, murders him, usurps the throne, and tries to undermine the prestige of his peers and dominate his rivals. When British postwar intragroup competitions in the Second World War are compared with the standard set in *Macbeth*, a lively rivalry of memorial plaques and war writing suddenly looks a lot more ‘civilized.’ It was just “a right shame” that it cost 70 to 85 million war dead to reach the postwar part.

⁵⁵⁸ OCW papers, Abyssinia Box 2. IWM.

naming and characterizing his many friends--but never his rivals. Calvert, in the years before alcohol and agony overwhelmed his judgment, quickly published *Prisoners of Hope*.⁵⁵⁹ Even soldiers who didn't especially like Wingate, like Jack Masters, benefited from the proximity, and Jack Masters' account comes closest--of all of Wingate's contemporaries--of depicting the war in the ironic, cruel terms most associated with the First World War.⁵⁶⁰ War writing helps preserve memories, of course, but with few exceptions (Robert Graves comes to mind) the writing intends to honor the soldiers who suffered and died—to continue the competition for scarce honor, both for the writer who puts pen to paper, and for the soldiers included. Calvert, aware that his reputation was on the wane after a court martial for homosexual behavior, became increasingly sensitive, and lashed out figures who tried to help him—but who had also perhaps eclipsed him in professional accomplishment. Calvert despaired of Slim for the latter's disparagement of Wingate and the Chindits, and he twice took offense to Fergusson, which the latter, as he was always able, parried with wit and warmth.⁵⁶¹ Calvert tried to reinvigorate his reputation using the medium of war writing, but was only partially successful.⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁹ Calvert's title comes from the Biblical reference that inspired the moniker for Wingate's "stronghold" concept, similar to a 21st century "forward operating base." Zechariah 9:12, KJV. "Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do declare that I will render double unto thee."

Michael Calvert, *Prisoners of Hope* (London: Cooper, 1952; 1996).

⁵⁶⁰ John Masters, *The Road Past Mandalay: A Personal Narrative* (New York Harper, 1961). In terms of First World War literature, I have in mind the ineffective heroics of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Her Privates We*, and *A Farewell to Arms*.

⁵⁶¹ See Fergusson's apologetic letter to Calvert published in David Rooney, *Mad Mike : A Life of Michael Calvert* (London: Leo Cooper, 1997).

⁵⁶² Michael Calvert, *Fighting Mad* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1964; 2004).

The discourse of honor surrounding Wingate's units remained fraught and conflicted for decades afterwards. Churchill gave Wingate a guest-star role in his descriptions of Burma: indeed his depictions of Wingate are just about the only positive thing to say about Burma or India in the entire five volumes.⁵⁶³ Churchill (like Thucydides) managed to write a history that includes virtually no references to women whatsoever, and yet Wingate's wife, Lorna, makes a surprising (and romanticized) appearance in Churchill's account when Wingate is back in London after the first Chindit campaign.⁵⁶⁴ If soldiers from the Indian Army staff resented Wingate's glory while he was alive, they went to work about it after his death, as Kirby provided Wingate with the longest profile in the official history of *The War Against Japan*, but dismissed his psychology, character, ability, and suggested (with incredible bitterness) that Wingate was lucky to die before others found out that he was a fraud.⁵⁶⁵ Field-Marshal Slim wrote his own "classic" and followed Kirby's line in attacking Wingate—Tulloch, Lorna, and Calvert assumed that Slim's attack was disingenuous, and that he was miffed at Churchill's publically stated preference for Wingate.⁵⁶⁶ In turn, Thompson, Mead, Tulloch, Fergusson and countless others fired back at the Official Historians.⁵⁶⁷ Even Lord Moran, Churchill's doctor, joined in, dismissing

⁵⁶³ David Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (New York: Random House, 2005).

⁵⁶⁴ Churchill, 5, 63.

⁵⁶⁵ Kirby, 3. Rooney, *Wingate and the Chindits: Redressing the Balance*. Mead.

⁵⁶⁶ Slim *Defeat into Victory*.

⁵⁶⁷ Henry Pownall, *Chief of Staff: The Diaries of Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Pownall, Volume Two 1940-1944*, ed. Brian Bond, vol. 2 (London: Leo Cooper, 1972). Mead and Bidwell. Mead; Shelford Bidwell, "Wingate and the Official Historians: An Alternative View," *Journal of Contemporary History* 15, no. 2 (1980).

Wingate as half mad, and even went so far to dismiss Wingate's strategies.⁵⁶⁸ Given that Wingate was Lord Moran's patient at one time, it made Moran's behavior as a clinician unethical, as a strategist untrained, and as writer faintly ridiculous—but in sum: perfectly human. All in all, the battles of the Chindits and Merrill's Marauder's produced no strategic victories, but did generate half a dozen classics of military adventure; and the drama of the story eventually aided Barbara Tuchmann's receiving of the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction. Long after the last bullet was fired, the competition for scarce honor continued.

Wingate, holding as much power as he did, and dying so much sooner than his high-ranking peers, inevitably fell victim to the conflict inherent in military units. Fergusson, in turn, attacked Wingate's critics more than once, underlining the competition by referring to Wingate's critics as "professional rivals".⁵⁶⁹ Michael Calvert (and many others) went further and declared the attacks on Wingate a deliberate conspiracy.⁵⁷⁰

Government sponsored projects such as the BBC's *WW2: People's War* and independent personal blogs have enabled subsequent generations to draw attention to an ancestor's participation in coalitional violence; they honor their ancestor and also, depending upon the narrative they produce, show their family's history of service to the community or even signal their family's willingness to participate in violence. Sometimes a connection to the Chindits is not fully understood by the family member due to a dearth of information. Even then, descendents will often do their best to honor what remains, as is the case in the following touching tribute to a Chindit grandfather using a modest internet blog:

⁵⁶⁸ Charles Moran, *Winston Churchill : The Struggle for Survival 1940-1965 Taken from Diaries of Lord Moran* (London: Sphere Books, 1968), 113-15.

⁵⁶⁹ Fergusson, 242.

⁵⁷⁰ Paterson.

Towards the end of 2015, my dad sent away for Grandad's army records, and we were surprised at what we got back – his movements throughout the war and his notification of release. We were proud to read: "Military conduct – Exemplary. A really good type of soldier, trustworthy, sober and cheerful, who always worked willingly. Saw active service in Burma 1944 and is strongly recommended for any employment entailing mechanical work, such as driving and maintaining a motor vehicle".⁵⁷¹

On the soldier's way out the door, the army modestly signaled his usefulness to his community. Seventy years later, a young man honored this individual with a public memorial using a technology almost certainly unimaginable during Second World War. The expressions shift year by year, but they continue to occur.

More complex efforts can serve a similar purpose, and are written with the explicit intention of redistributing honor. John Igbino, a British citizen of Nigerian descent, recently published a volume that demonstrates how certain Nigerian Chindit formations were being denigrated and neglected as 'fringe' Chindits. In the most shocking page of the book, Igbino shows how postwar photo editors published a popular image of white Chindits processing down a jungle trail with a wounded comrade—and to simplify the image both graphically and ideologically, they had cropped a Nigerian Chindit out of the frame.⁵⁷² Igbino's book seeks to

⁵⁷¹ Paul Newton, "World War 2: My Grandad, the Chindit: Serving with the 1st Battalion King's (Liverpool) Regiment, India and Burma 1944," (2016), <https://medium.com/pnewton84/my-grandad-the-chindit-9e66bc066b60>.

⁵⁷² John Igbino, *Spidermen: Nigerian Chindits and Wingate's Operation Thursday, Burma 1943 – 1944*, (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2018)., photo illustrations.

give the Nigerian Chindits “the attention they rightly deserve” after decades of being “neglected by contemporary Chindit writers”.⁵⁷³

Conclusion

At times, the soldiers honored in the present made poor tactical and strategic choices in the past, not strictly because of the fog of war or lack of skill or professionalism, but because the coalitions formed for violence created a highly competitive environment, and many soldiers in rapidly changing circumstances inevitably made choices that maximized their individual ‘utility’ (to borrow a term from economics), with preferences set not always set by their country, but often by the competition within the military ‘brotherhood’ to which they belonged. The soldiers who joined Wingate’s campaigns provide startling expressions of a human nature,⁵⁷⁴ even as the particularities of individual variation, modern war, and empire rule out an attempt to reduce the experience of the SNS, or the Patriots, or Gideon Force, or the Chindits to

⁵⁷³ Dr. John Igbino expanded on his reasons for writing the book: “People of my generation - I am 71 - are often accused of nostalgia, particularly about the Empire. But people never ask us what it is, or was, about the Empire we are nostalgic about. For me - and perhaps for countless number of people - some of the things I am nostalgic about was the kind of sense of belonging and brotherhood of mankind which the Empire engendered in me when I was growing up in the 1950s.” A personal communication via LinkedIn. April 2020.

⁵⁷⁴ Smith, examining the absence of the evidence of war in prehistory and the appalling record of war in human history, helpfully distinguishes between “components of human nature from expressions of human nature. The disposition to war is an expression of human nature rather than a component of it.” David Livingstone Smith, “War, Evolution, and the Nature of Human Nature,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Perspectives on Violence, Homicide, and War*, ed. Todd K. Shackelford and Viviana A. Weekes-Shackelford (New York Oxford University Press, 2012).

anything as ridiculously simple as ethno-sectarian violence, or primordial war, or religious differences, or fear of a rival empire, or the pursuit of natural resources. It is hard to find examples of Wingate's soldiers caring about any of those things; the texture of their experience centers more on banalities of evil—the ordinariness of behaviors that culminate in something awful.⁵⁷⁵ Even Wingate, who famously stated his preference for fighting on behalf of the Zionists, told his wife that if in post-war Palestine a Jewish state offered him the chief-of-staff job instead of overall command, he felt that he would decline to fight.⁵⁷⁶

Both during the Second World War and the present day, hierarchy within the military decreases intragroup conflict by creating a clear and almost unequivocal structure of rank and prestige. Wingate's 'special forces', with their fast promotions, freedom of action, and independence from military hierarchy could actually increase intragroup conflict—that is to say, special forces increased conflict among soldiers, especially in environments of limited resources. At times, the conflict could spoil the solutions to the collective action problem necessary for 'victory' in modern war. But the individual soldiers in high status, high reward positions may not have noticed that conventional campaigns, as in Palestine and Abyssinia, accomplished most of the actual work of enforcing their side's political will their enemy.

⁵⁷⁵ Borrowing Hannah Arendt's phrase. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem : A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963).

⁵⁷⁶ Paterson. Digital file 23, 30:00.

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7. “Posturing to shoulder a heavier operational, command and control role”

Orde Wingate’s Growing Influence on Modern Warfare

An inherent irony of Wingate’s units—the Special Night Squads, Gideon Force, and the ‘Chindit’ Special Force—was that they did not match the elite training that later units would mythologize and claim as ‘special forces.’ Instead, the units consisted of rather ordinary volunteers with inadequate means who lived through grinding hardships, endured personal risk, and showed inarguable flashes of courage. Strategic outcomes—if claimed at all—were often overstated. Later writings on Wingate’s operations, especially from the American perspective, ignore the fact that more conventional, massive military efforts produced each campaign’s definitive results. In Palestine, the British military’s violent ruthlessness combined with the political assuagement of the interests of Arab elites to bring an end to the Arab revolt of 1938. A pincer movement of two (relatively) modern British armies destroyed the Italian stranglehold on Ethiopia in 1941. A carefully marshaled and well-armed Allied force ended the Japanese occupation of Burma in 1945. Yet by the late 1990s, the United States Army found itself more committed than ever to trying to chase the Wingate myth of “self-contained formations” that

could operate “independent of the division headquarters or support structures”.⁵⁷⁷ Historical evidence offers little evidence that such units, if even possible, would benefit America’s strategic goals. Why have such units persisted (and increasingly flourished) in the American military?

The present chapter looks at Wingate’s paradoxical influence on modern military formations in the United States during and after the Second World War. Other writers have emphasized Wingate’s influence on the Israeli military, or counter-insurgency, or his sustainment of British ‘small wars’ doctrine.⁵⁷⁸ Even more writers have critiqued (or at least tried to understand) the use of special forces at the level of tactics, operations, or strategy.⁵⁷⁹ A

⁵⁷⁷Joel D. Rayburn, 1, 10. The quote examines the U.S. Army’s struggle, especially under former Army Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki, to adapt to the ideal of the ‘Revolution in Military Affairs,’ wherein mastery of technology and information could win decisive battles with less of a ‘footprint’. Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense under George W. Bush, pushed hard for what he fantasized could be a “lighter” and “more lethal” force, while Shinseki pumped the brakes until crashing into the Iraq war in 2003. Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Group, 2006). More on the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs in Dima Adamsky, *The Culture of Military Innovation: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, the Us, and Israel*, vol. null, Null (2010). See also the “battle” (i.e. above tactics and below strategy) arguments of Stephen D. Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁵⁷⁸ Bruce Hoffman, *Anonymous Soldiers : The Struggle for Israel, 1917-1947*, First edition. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015). Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*. Akavia.

⁵⁷⁹ Richard Halloran, "Military Is Quietly Rebuilding Its Special Operations Forces," *The New York Times*, July 18 1982; Richard L. Russell to Best Defense, 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/channel/best-defense/>; Hasan Bilgin and Kerim Goztepe, "Strategic Utility Analysis of Special Operations Forces Applying Game

closer look at the moments when leaders adopt special forces tactics and strategies, as well as the motivations of individuals joining such units, brings to the fore a persistent pattern of risk-taking behavior and operational overreach, sometimes in the face of frightening loss and desperation, and other times to make progress through a hierarchical coalition organized for violence. In this light, special forces appears less as an 'answer' or a 'solution' to arcane strategic puzzles, and instead as a set of practices that provide personal answers to the mundane problems of life. Because the private motivations that make special forces so attractive to individual soldiers remain underexplored, the following chapter seeks to show the peculiar historical influence of Wingate's campaigns on American military organization and

Theory," *Journal of Management and Information Science* 1, no. 1 (2013). Anthony King, "The Special Air Service and the Concentration of Military Power," *Armed Forces & Society* 35, no. 4 (2009); Tony Geraghty, *Black Ops: The Rise of Special Forces in the Cia, the Sas, and Mossad* (Pegasus Books, 2012). Derek Leebaert, *To Dare and to Conquer: Special Operations and the Destiny of Nations, from Achilles to Al Qaeda* (New York, NY: Back Bay Books, 2006). Ohad Leslau, "Worth the Bother? Israeli Experience and the Utility of Special Operations Forces," *Contemporary Security Policy* 31, no. 3 (2010); Christopher Lamb and David Tucker, *United States Special Operations Forces* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007; 2020). Jon R Lindsay, "Reinventing the Revolution: Technological Visions, Counterinsurgent Criticism, and the Rise of Special Operations," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 36, no. 3 (2013). Linda Robinson, "The Future of Special Operations: Beyond Kill and Capture," *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 6 (2012). Gordon C Bonham, "Special Operations Forces. The Combination Tool in the Cinc's Operational Toolbox," (DTIC Document, 1991). Walter Haynes to *War on the Rocks*, 17 April 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/the-hidden-costs-of-strategy-by-special-operations/>. Mikah Zenko, "Donald Trump Is Pushing America's Special Forces Past the Breaking Point," *Foreign Policy* (2017), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/01/donald-trump-is-pushing-americas-special-forces-past-the-breaking-point-jsoc-navy-seal/>.

strategy; it also emphasizes the psychological motivations and strategic traps of Wingate's methods.

OVERVIEW

Wingate's approaches filtered into the United States military in at least two direct ways as a result of his Chindit campaigns. The first occurred during the Second World War with George C. Marshall's explicit advocacy for the creation of an American 'long range penetration' brigade popularly known as Merrill's Marauders;⁵⁸⁰ the experience of the new unit and its surviving veterans shaped the training and institutionalization of the U.S. Army Rangers, and inspired the wider use of special forces tactics and strategies. The second way Wingate's approaches influenced the American military came during the Vietnam war, through the influence of Chindit veteran Robert Thompson; Thompson's influence centered on a strategic reimagining of the battlefield to rely more on local cooperation, fewer troops, and a less traditional line-of-communication with which to maintain ground forces. In both cases, Wingate's methods attempted maximal benefit for minimal cost, and they were branded with concepts such as parsimony, leverage, and professionalism.

THE CHINDITS AND MARAUDERS, STRONGHOLDS AND FORWARD OPERATING BASES

At the Quebec Conference in 1943, General Sir Alan Brooke (CIGS) and Prime Minister Winston Churchill had Brigadier-General Orde C. Wingate brief the Americans on the planning and execution of his first "long-range penetration" campaign (popularly known as the Chindits), as well as a possible follow up effort planned for 1944. They expected Wingate's briefing to

⁵⁸⁰ Wingate called his units "long-range penetration" columns, whereas Marshall preferred "long range penetration." I use both, depending upon the context.

appeal to the Americans due to its heroics, its direct action against the Japanese in Burma, and its proximity to China, which was an American strategic obsession at the time due to the tremendous number of Japanese army soldiers occupying the eastern mainland.⁵⁸¹ General George C. Marshall, the American Chief of Staff of the Army, liked the plan enough to commit to it. He would also raise an 'elite' American brigade to be placed under Wingate's command and trained in his methods.⁵⁸² Biographers of Wingate tend to lose sight of Marshall, lumping him into the anonymity of an American 'official mind' that wanted to support any kind of action in China.⁵⁸³ Marshall, desperate for a plan that at least offered the possibility of engaging the Japanese army on mainland Asia, quickly adopted Wingate's plan as his own. Just as the British General Archibald Wavell had overleapt his staff process in adopting Wingate's 'long-range penetration' plan in 1942, so with Marshall in 1943. Marshall was eager to receive credit for backing Wingate. Speaking to his biographer, Forrest C. Pogue, Marshall said in 1956:

"Wingate was strong for me, because I printed over here his report on what was needed [for his next operation] when the British staff suppressed it. I wouldn't go for that a damned bit. They didn't want him here [in Washington] but I asked for him, and I pushed his project."

The trip to Washington was an extraordinary step for a British brigadier general, and one not recorded in the biographies of Wingate.

⁵⁸¹ Rana Mitter, *China's War with Japan, 1937-1945 : The Struggle for Survival* (2013).

⁵⁸² Pogue, 257. For the sake of clarity, I have replaced Pogue's use of parentheses with the em dash.

⁵⁸³ Marshall is missing from the indexes of both Anglim and Royle. He only appears in Bidwell in relationship to his promotion of Stilwell, and in Sykes he is only listed as among those to receive a press briefing upon the launch of Operation Thursday. See also Bidwell, *The Chindit War: Stilwell, Wingate, and the Campaign in Burma, 1944*. Royle, *Orde Wingate*.

From Quebec, Wingate journeyed to Washington for talks with Arnold and Marshall. To Wingate's delight the American Air Chief made every effort possible to furnish necessary air support for his operations, and General Marshall took a close interest in the arrangements. When Wingate explained special morale problems that arose in his operations because men feared that they would be left behind if wounded, Marshall asked Arnold if he could design an air-rescue project. The Air Forces Chief could and did, devising the forerunner of methods later perfected and used with great success in Korea and Vietnam.⁵⁸⁴

Pogue puts matter too civilly. During his previous operation, Wingate had ordered his officers to abandon the lame and wounded hundreds of miles behind Japanese lines. Sometimes they were left in Burmese villages, but other times they simply collapsed, deep in the jungle, from malnutrition and exhaustion. A third of the force never made it back. The air-rescue project morphed into 1st Air Commando, led by Philip Cochran, an officer more influential in the development of the United States Air Force than Wingate ever was for the British.⁵⁸⁵ Marshall quickly grew protective of both Wingate and his campaign plans, for he had "a great fondness

⁵⁸⁴ Pogue, 257.

⁵⁸⁵ Cochran was a fighter pilot who had just received tremendous honors for his operations in North Africa. When interviewed for the job in Burma, he refused it, saying he didn't want to "go to Asian jungles to fly 'little' airplanes in a resupply and evacuation role". He eventually relented when the mission was sexed up with gliders and given the name 'Air Commando'. He was also given a co-commander to reduce the administrative burden, and he received "the highest possible priority for men and materiel". Cochran's "success" in keeping alive the starving, disease-ridden soldiers in northern Burma led the United States Airforce to push for the wider adoption of air resupply in Korea and Vietnam. Mason et al., 9-10.

for Wingate” and “had no doubt: ‘Wingate would have been in the class of Lawrence of Arabia but for his death’”.⁵⁸⁶

Finally, Marshall took one further step to cement Wingate’s influence on American military thinking. He sent a copy of Wingate’s report on the first Chindit campaign to the United States Army Infantry School for further study, and they in turn adapted it into an essay entitled *Long Range Penetration*.⁵⁸⁷ As of April 2020, the Infantry School’s adaptation is a more widely accessible report than Wingate’s original. Its dissemination provided another opportunity for Wingate’s ideas to pollinate among bored staff officers trapped in western Georgia.

Knowing that South East Asia Command was a severely overstretched theater of war, Marshall tried to make the resources he sent to Wingate nearly sacrosanct. Marshall later recalled that he “warned everybody that if they took anything from the operations—Stillwell, the British, and the Chinese all wanted some of the stuff I had allotted for Wingate—I would take it back.”

Marshall ultimately could not prevent the plan’s interruption. The second Chindit operation depended upon a concurrent three prong offensive that never took place. When the two British offensives failed to materialize, Wingate’s entire operation steadily bent towards the implacable, dour American commander General Joseph Stilwell, and Stilwell successfully lobbied to move the new American brigade under his control.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁶ Pogue, 257.

⁵⁸⁷ *Long Range Penetration Units*.

⁵⁸⁸ Bidwell, *The Chindit War: Stilwell, Wingate, and the Campaign in Burma, 1944*, 73.

Nevertheless, Wingate's Chindit veterans, especially Bernard Fergusson, trained the new American unit in jungle fighting and long-range penetration.⁵⁸⁹ Stilwell put his son-in-law, Frank Merrill, in command, and the unit became popularly known as "Merrill's Marauders".⁵⁹⁰ Stilwell sent the Marauders on an enveloping maneuver of a Japanese division in northern Burma, and then tried to persuade two recalcitrant Chinese divisions to engage the Japanese head on. After the Chinese dictator, Chiang K'ai-shek, agreed to the campaign, Stilwell bragged to his wife:

Put down 18 December 1943 as the day, when for the first time in history, a foreigner was given command of Chinese troops with full control over all officers and no strings attached.⁵⁹¹

Stillwell was sorely mistaken, however, and the lightly equipped Marauders became the main effort for the first few weeks while the Chinese divisions dithered and delayed. As a consequence, the Marauders suffered greatly on their march through the jungle, then suffered Japanese attacks, and then suffered some more as they were ordered onwards to more obscure

⁵⁸⁹ Stilwell, who begrudgingly admired a few of the key Chindit leaders, stated that monocled and bearded Fergusson "looks like a dude, but he might be a soldier." Tuchman; Gary J. Bjorge, *Merrill's Marauders: Combined Operations in Northern Burma in 1944* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College: Combat Studies Institute, 1996), 6-10.

Historian Simon Anglim, working through the Wingate papers, found that Wingate rejected labeling the Marauders as 'Long Range Penetration' units because he felt they failed to closely follow his training protocols and leadership. Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 176.

⁵⁹⁰ Formally called the 5037th Provisional Unit, conducting operation 'GALAHAD.' Note the Wingate influence on the operational name, which is that of the Christian knight of Arthurian legend that successfully quests for the Holy Grail.

⁵⁹¹ Bjorge, 11. Stillwell overestimated the amount of control he would be able to exert.

objectives. It made for an ambivalent outcome, but decent heroics, and tremendous legends. After a few months of operations, however, the jungle, the Japanese, and Stilwell's relentless orders had reduced the Marauders from 3,000 to 1,400 active soldiers, the majority of the unit having been evacuated.⁵⁹² They had gone from holding blocking positions along the enemy's flank, to static defense, to seizing an obscure and strategically unimportant airstrip outside of Myitkyina—and then having to defend that as well.⁵⁹³ Then the monsoon hit. Incredibly, after Wingate's death in a plane crash in March 1944, the Chindits were placed under Stilwell's command as well. He was a soldier as ruthless as Wingate, but without the imagination to even pretend to give uplifting orders—only the drive to send soldiers in the direction of his vanity. The saving element for both the Marauders and the Chindits was that the Japanese had to endure the same jungle, only without resupply.⁵⁹⁴ The Allies also received greater support from the local Kachin, Karen, and Shah ethnic groups who, even if their preference for the Allies was uncertain, they could at least sense that the Japanese were no longer ascendant.⁵⁹⁵ Myitkyina held an interesting place in Stilwell's imagination. Capturing it, he felt, would show him to be a commander capable of seizing an important objective. The head of South East Asia Command (SEAC), Louis Mountbatten, had been led by his staff to believe that "Myitkyina could not be

⁵⁹² Tuchman, 444.

⁵⁹³ David W. Hogan, *U.S. Army Special Operations in World War II* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, Department of the Army, 1992), 115-19.

Tuchman, 445-51.

⁵⁹⁴ Latimer. McLynn.

⁵⁹⁵ Hogan, 119-22. The OSS cooperation with the Kachins, in particular, helped Americans imagine the possibilities of cooperating with indigenous peoples, and later shaped the operations of both the Green Berets and the Central Intelligence Agency.

taken, or if taken it could not be held, or if held was not worth it".⁵⁹⁶ Stilwell managed to disprove the first two points, but not the last one, and there's the rub. Tellingly, when on May 17th the airstrip at Myitkyina fell to a mixed force of Marauders, Kachin guerrillas, and Chinese regulars, Stilwell recorded in his diary, "WILL THIS BURN UP THE LIMIES!".⁵⁹⁷ Perhaps it did, but any bitter aftertaste was quickly washed out with the incredible superlatives often applied to special forces campaigns in hindsight: Churchill called it a "brilliant feat of arms," Mountbatten called it, an "outstanding success," and a "feat which will live in military history".⁵⁹⁸ The next day, planes landed with hardly any food, water, or reinforcements, but Stilwell did manage to bring an entourage of twelve journalists.⁵⁹⁹ To celebrate the effort, an American newsreel later added an appropriately martial tune over images of wrecked aircraft, decimated soldiers, and confused staff officers perched atop an isolated plateau that the newsreel gamely described as "an important stop on the air supply route to China".⁶⁰⁰

After the fall of the 'cities' of Myitkyina and Mogaung, and a subsequent distribution of outsized prestige for unwanted spoils, the remnants of the Marauders were reorganized into a new taskforce, and the remnants of the Chindits were disbanded.⁶⁰¹ Years later Charles N.

⁵⁹⁶ Tuchman, 448.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., 448-49.

Winston Sir Churchill, *The Second World War*, 6 vols. (London Cassell, 1948), 569.Vol. 5.

⁵⁹⁹ Tuchman, 449.

⁶⁰⁰ United News Company, *Allies Win Myitkyina Airstrip* (New York: Office of War Information, 1944).

⁶⁰¹ The few 'still fit' members of the original GALAHAD mission became the 475th Infantry Regiment (Long Range Penetration, Special). They were thrown together with a modified cavalry regiment to become the blandly named MARS Taskforce.

Hunter, the second-in-command of the Marauders, wrote a blistering memoir of Stilwell's misuse of the unit, stating that Stilwell led the Marauders into disaster in order to "bolster his ego".⁶⁰² If this was one of the major starting points of special operations in the American military—and official U.S. military historians believe that it was—then it was an ominous beginning.⁶⁰³ In American military lore, many soldiers know of the prestige associated with the Marauders, but very few knew how little they had accomplished, or at what cost.

Several years later, in the Korean War, the Army brass created a much publicized 'Ranger School' in the hopes of penetrating enemy lines out of a "sense of desperation" after General MacArthur's humiliating setbacks.⁶⁰⁴ In the same time frame, game theorists began deriding the military strategy of World War 2 as "too conservative" and advocated for the use of

Kenneth Finlayson, "The End Run of Galahad," *Veritas* 2, no. 1 (2006). Bidwell describes how "The scandal of Galahad's treatment was hushed up, conditions improved, medals were distributed". Bidwell, *The Chindit War: Stilwell, Wingate, and the Campaign in Burma, 1944*, 284-85.

Troy J. Sacquety, "The Mars Task Force, the Ultimate Model for Long Range Penetration Warfare" *Veritas* 5, no. 4 (2009).

Bjorge, 3.

Finlayson.

⁶⁰² Charles N. Hunter, *Galahad* (San Antonio, TX: The Naylor Co., 1963), 1-2.

⁶⁰³ A high regard for Wingate and his cooperation with Air Commando appears in journal articles published by the Central Intelligence Agency. Bob Bergin, "The Development of a British-American Concept of Special Operations in Ww2 Burma," *Studies in Intelligence* 61, no. 4 (2017).

Hogan.

Mason et al.

⁶⁰⁴ Charles H. Briscoe, "Largely out of a Sense of Desperation, Macarthur's Decisions Renewed the Army's Interest in Special Operations," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 6, no. 18.

"mixed strategies" or random moves to paralyze an opponent with uncertainty, especially when making "command decisions for small military organizations".⁶⁰⁵ To train the new Ranger units, the army recruited veterans from Burma, ostensibly so they could pass on the lessons they learned in enduring hardships, capturing strategically unimportant objectives, and scraping by with as little resources as possible. The local press, undeterred by history, hyped the Rangers as the ultimate warriors, capable of sneaking up on an enemy and decapitating him in silence—and then catching the head before it could hit the ground.⁶⁰⁶ In theory, the training sought to "combine the best of the lessons learned from the various elite forces that had existed in World War II".⁶⁰⁷ The cadre included "individuals who had served in either allied or former adversary commando type organizations"—that is to include former Marauders and even Chindits—and then "created a tough, realistic training environment which included extreme physical training, live-fire exercises, and advanced field problems executed in all weather and terrain conditions day or night".⁶⁰⁸ The Ranger cadre to this day refer to Ranger School as a 'tactics program,' and those tactics are derived from Wingate's long-range-penetration program of wireless

⁶⁰⁵ OG Haywood Jr, "Military Decision and Game Theory," *Journal of the Operations Research Society of America* 2, no. 4 (1954). RAND famously encouraged the development of game theory; when looking backwards for facts that would support their findings, they found the Chindits. A. H. Peterson, E. E. Conger, and George C. Reinhardt, *Symposium on the Role of Airpower in Counterinsurgency and Unconventional Warfare: Chindit Operations in Burma*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1963), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_memoranda/RM3654.html.

⁶⁰⁶ The history of the Rangers depicted in Mark Moyar, *Oppose Any Foe: The Rise of America's Special Operations Forces* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 105.

⁶⁰⁷ Chris Semancik, "Rangers All the Way!," Army Heritage Museum, https://www.army.mil/article/12478/rangers_all_the_way.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

communication and a thinly established supply line. After a brief training period, the Rangers were sent to Korea. On the journey, they heard an announcement that the war would be over before they could reach their destination. The sailors cheered the end of the war. The Rangers, however, robbed of their purpose and sense of elite usefulness, sulked. Then China entered the war, ensuring that it would not terminate but become an indeterminate stalemate. Now the sailors sulked, but the Rangers cheered, seeming to prefer an open war (or even a stalemate) to a decisive victory in which they had no share.⁶⁰⁹ Once on the battlefield, however, the Rangers' penetration missions did not occur, as patrolling behind enemy lines was considered too likely to instead provoke a larger engagement requiring conventional forces to bailout the exposed Ranger unit. Instead, the Rangers simply filled in as regular infantry units, a disciplined tactical decision on the part of American commanders.⁶¹⁰ The Rangers, however, with an irony that escaped them, complained that they were being misused.⁶¹¹

Such discipline vanished during Vietnam. Even at the peak of American military power in Vietnam—which still only consisted of ten divisions—the combination of challenging terrain, anti-colonial resentment, and a corrupt South Vietnamese government combined once again to compel civilian and military leaders to grasp at tactics that suggested doing more with less. Soldiers tend to want extra recognition for trying (not necessarily succeeding) in doing more with less. In this context, President John F. Kennedy personally encouraged the wearing of green berets by Special Forces soldiers—as they become formalized, special forces units also

⁶⁰⁹ Moyer, 104-05.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid. Colonel Francis J. Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961-1971*, Vietnam Studies (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 1973; 2004).

⁶¹¹ Moyer, 105-08.

receive capital letters—whom he intended to deploy in large numbers to Vietnam.⁶¹² The Navy Seals were formally organized at the same time. As the war ground on and more conventionally trained forces entered the country, conventional fighting occurred on many occasions, but much of the violence still involved what became known—thanks largely to Chindit veteran Robert Thompson—as counter-insurgency.⁶¹³ Since, theoretically, the South Vietnamese were supposed to be increasingly capable allies, beleaguered American leaders allowed their lines-of-

⁶¹² U.S. Army Special Forces, popularly known as the Green Berets, inspired a wave of post-Vietnam scholarship that considered the symbolic messaging of the Special Forces as a dogma of white, masculine Americanisms, and related it to myth-making component of a broader ideology centered on American security. Cinema artists adapted the green beret as a go-to visual signifier of 'elite' soldiering. The bland patriotism of John Wayne's *The Green Berets* and the shattered Kurtz of *Apocalypse Now* stand foremost among them.

Robert D Dean, "Masculinity as Ideology: John F. Kennedy and the Domestic Politics of Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History* 22, no. 1 (1998); Alasdair Spark, "The Soldier at the Heart of the War: The Myth of the Green Beret in the Popular Culture of the Vietnam Era," *Journal of American Studies* 18, no. 1 (2009); Roger Ebert, "The Green Berets Movie Review," (1968), <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-green-berets-1968>. J. Justin Gustainis, "John F. Kennedy and the Green Berets: The Rhetorical Use of the Hero Myth," *Communication studies* 40, no. 1 (1989). John Wayne et al., *The Green Berets* (Los Angeles: Warner Bros. Home Entertainment, 1968; 2019). Francis Ford Coppola et al., *Apocalypse Now* (Los Angeles: Lions Gate Films, 1979; 2019).

⁶¹³ Twenty-first century military leaders continue to cite Thompson as a key influence. General Sir David Ramsbotham cited Sir Robert Thompson's methods of maneuver and air supply as a key factor in winning the 'last colonial war' in British Malaya. General David Ramsbotham, "Lecture 158: The Last Colonial War," University of Texas at Austin, <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/britishstudies/>. Also referenced in John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002).

communication to collapse into the use of forward operating bases that looked a lot like Wingate's Strongholds from the second Chindit campaign.⁶¹⁴ Robert Thompson kept Wingate in mind during the war in Vietnam, and cited him as a key originator of many of the tactics used throughout the war for supplying distant outposts and exploiting the advantages of wireless communication.⁶¹⁵ He wrote in 1972 that Wingate "was the first to appreciate that wireless and air support, particularly air supply, could give ground forces complete freedom of movement in jungle terrain where otherwise the lack of communications would restrict their movement to the very limited roads, rivers, or railway".⁶¹⁶ Thompson, who had earned his reputation for counter-insurgency in Malaya, found that in Vietnam the Americans naively failed to place all civil and military resources under a single authority—an idea that may not have been feasible anyway, since the United States lacked the power of a colonial government.⁶¹⁷ His doubts about American policy, however, did not tarnish his view of his former commander, Wingate, for

⁶¹⁴ Dale Andrade, "Westmoreland Was Right: Learning the Wrong Lessons from the Vietnam War," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19, no. 2 (2008). Errol Morris et al., "The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara," (New York Sony Pictures Classics, 2004).

⁶¹⁵ Thompson's essays on Wingate's influence on American and British warfare can be found in Mead and Tulloch. He later praised Wingate extensively in Robert Grainger Ker Sir Thompson, *Make for the Hills : Memories of Far Eastern Wars* (London: Leo Cooper, 1989). Anglim argues for the importance of Thompson's advocacy in *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior*, 16-17.

⁶¹⁶ Tulloch, 3.

⁶¹⁷ William Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization : Collected Essays* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 566, 81-82.

whom he went out of his way to lionize, and shield from criticism in the viciously see-sawing assessments passing back and forth within British military circles.⁶¹⁸

In the dispiriting collapse of American efforts in Vietnam, the United States Army decided to create the 75th Ranger Regiment. When it was established in 1973, it adopted the lineage of Merrill's Marauders, and used the Marauder's shoulder patch as an inspiration for the flash for their berets.⁶¹⁹ The most recent editions of the Ranger Handbook—the field manual for the United States Army Ranger School—explicitly cite the influence of Orde Wingate's training and techniques, and credit him with the organization and training of the Marauders, and then describe the Marauders as “the father” of the modern 75th Ranger Regiment.⁶²⁰ Most members of the Ranger Regiment still go through Ranger School but, for the regiment as a whole, the Wingate influence on special operations is largely in terms of a historic afterglow that confers prestige upon the unit, and provides a narrative that communicates its status in the military hierarchy to other soldiers, and to the broader population.

The lure of special forces has been felt especially strong since September 11th, 2001, when terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center buildings in New York and severely damaged the Pentagon with the suicidal use of hijacked commercial aircraft.⁶²¹ In Afghanistan, United

⁶¹⁸ See also the forward to Mead. The most widely cited attacks on Wingate come from Slim. And Kirby, 3.

⁶¹⁹ Semancik.

⁶²⁰ U.S. Dept. of the Army Headquarters, *Ranger Handbook, Tc 3-21.76* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army Headquarters, 2017), xviii.

⁶²¹ The most useful history of the September 11 attacks and the United States' immediate response remains Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

States special forces units combined with deep strike jet aircraft to quickly drive Al-Qaeda militants and Taliban forces into hiding, but were unable to either seize or hold or protect the villages, towns, or cities that constituted the most important part of the battlefield. Similarly, the invasion of Iraq marked perhaps the largest use of special forces tactics and strategies in history, with almost half the geographic terrain of Iraq 'cleared' using special forces. It was again correctly assumed by war planners that special forces soldiers could destroy targets in western and northern Iraq with a reliance on superior technology, skillful training, and precisely planned operations. War planners failed to consider, however, that Iraqi militants might simply melt into towns and cities, exert their will on the populations, and seek a fight only once the special forces soldiers had moved on. Further, a civil war broke out among the Kurdish forces supposedly allied with one another and with the United States, leaving northern Iraq's security in an even more perilous state. In this manner, special forces completed all of their key objectives during the invasion of Iraq, and yet failed to have a strategic impact on the opening moments of what became a decades long war.⁶²² This irony is not a design flaw: modern special forces units exist, from an anthropological perspective, in order to provide a sense of achievement and high status, a sense of self-control and certainty, and to create a close-knit bond between soldiers. Coalition building necessarily involves intragroup competition, and special forces provides a clear way to manage the costs of conflict in the struggle for hierarchical status. Special forces soldiers, like most of us, do not quite use such explicit language. Instead it is often coded in "unit cohesion" and "professionalism," with an accompanying emphasis on abstract ideals including freedom, democracy, and liberty, pulling language right out of Wingate's hat of Second World War strategies for intragroup competition:

⁶²² Joel D. Rayburn, 1, 103, 18.

insist on moral and professional superiority, compete in intense training environments, and marshal limited resources for high status results in circumstances of low strategic value.⁶²³

Beyond the units formally called 'special forces,' Wingate's methods for operating with a reduced footprint have continued to exert a broad tactical influence on warfare. The United States and Britain, in a key example, have established remote, well-defended compounds that communicate with one another via wireless transmission, and which the military supplies through air drops or intermittent ground convoys.⁶²⁴ Wingate, drawing on his Biblical nomenclature, used the word 'Strongholds' to describe such tactics in 1944, but in Iraq and Afghanistan the commanders use the perhaps less inspiring term of 'Forward Operating Base'.⁶²⁵ In any event, military leaders, unknowingly following Wingate, have forgone traditional 'lines-of-communication'. The establishment of traditional lines, however, may be a necessary condition for forcing their "political will" against their out-group rivals—that is to say, their enemies.

⁶²³ Leonard Wong, "Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War," (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2003).

⁶²⁴ The establishment of forward operating bases had become a widely accepted tactic in the 'War on Terror' as early as 2002. Curtis W. Hubbard, "Base Defense at the Special Forces Forward Operational Base" (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2002).

⁶²⁵ Forward Operating Bases (or F.O.B) have become increasingly complicated, belying their purpose as impermanent military structures. A description of these features (and the unexpected psychological costs) can be found in Douglas; Wong Lovelace, Leonard, "Cu @ the Fob: How the Forward Operating Base Is Changing the Life of Combat Soldiers," (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2006).

SPECIAL FORCES NOW

Wingate was a strategist, capable of re-imagining the objectives of organized violence under the constraint of limited resources. Famously, after each campaign he wrote blistering reports arguing that the broader army's failure to maintain a line-of-communication with his troops (he usually blamed the staff, occasionally blamed his men, and rarely blamed himself) reduced the survivability and usefulness of his soldiers, and consequently, his mission. He expected, especially during the first Chindit campaign, high casualties. After all, he loudly told his soldiers that only half of them could expect to survive the campaign, and he ordered them to leave the lame and wounded on the side of the trail.⁶²⁶ But he imagined, if not seriously executed, campaigns that would prove of strategic value. Since his British commanders only approved the creation of his units after major setbacks, it cannot have been truly shocking to a soldier as ruthless as Wingate that the resources necessary to complete his strategic objectives never materialized. The personal objectives, however, did materialize: the personal honor, the promotions, and the exclusivity of the club.

The personal rewards of special forces continue to materialize to this day, with the trade magazine *Army Times* baldly emphasizing, in a recent journalistic report, that special forces provides the opportunity to earn "big bucks" and "rapid promotion" in a "team you can trust" while deploying to a "real war".⁶²⁷ The *Army Times* report presumes that a decision on whether or not a soldier attempts to join special forces remains rooted in self-interest.

⁶²⁶ Fergusson.

⁶²⁷ Meghann Myers, "Earn Big Bucks, Move up Faster When You Go Army Special Ops — but Can You Cut It?," *The Army Times* (2018), <https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2018/09/24/earn-big-bucks-move-up-faster-when-you-go-army-special-ops-but-can-you-cut-it/>.

Perhaps it's the higher standards or the notoriously high operations tempo, but the [Special Operations Recruiting Battalion] is generally not accustomed to filling every spot. "Not necessarily that [special forces is] hard and they're afraid of it, but [soldiers feel] 'I'm good where I'm at, I'm successful where I'm at right now. I don't want to risk that'".⁶²⁸

For individual soldiers, the complexities of modern war ensure that the ultimate strategic or tactical effects of their choices recede into the distance, overwhelmed by the practicalities of balancing status and survival.

The selling point to leaders who choose to resource special forces remains the same, as shown with a quote from former Special Operations Command (SOCOM) commander Admiral William McRaven's *United States Special Operations Command 2020* report:

Whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives, relying on exercises, rotational presence, and advisory capabilities.⁶²⁹

The United States military has always been most straightforward in its recruiting pitch for families, regardless of whether or not the military can deliver:

In the end, our success is ultimately rooted in how well we take care of our most precious resource - the SOF warriors and their families.⁶³⁰

The report then alternates between the modest language of "deterrence", but inevitably slips into the doctrine of hope most essential to special forces budgets and brawn in a section titled

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ Public Affairs Office, "United States Special Operations Command 2020," (<http://www.socom.mil>: United States Department of Defense, 2013), 1.

⁶³⁰ Ibid., 2.

“Win the Current Fight.” It begins with a mitigating claim pointing out that special forces units are too small in number to accomplish the strategic objective they nevertheless are oriented towards: “The imperative to winning the current fight is first and foremost our commitment to Afghanistan, a significant international effort”.⁶³¹ The dependent clause carries a lot of information: there are many countries involved in Afghanistan with diverse interests; if the United States fails to obtain its objectives, McRaven wants to signal that the fault lies not with Special Operations Forces. “This effort is linked back through both the Joint Staff and Defense Department objectives to the National Security Strategy (NSS).” The intensive use of military slang, nomenclature, and jargon allows confusion to mitigate dissent, and prevents a discussion of whether or not “winning the current fight” can be obtained with the resources available—or if the purpose of the fight can be accurately described. “We have achieved unity of effort in this campaign and gained efficiencies by aligning all U.S. and coalition SOF under a single SOF command.” Wingate clawed resources out of conventionally organized armies, but in the United States we have provided ‘SOF’ with an independent budget, staff, and command, thereby obviating a competition over resources with other types of war power—or soft power, such as international aid organizations, or economic development programs. “As conventional forces continue to drawdown in Afghanistan, SOF is posturing to shoulder a heavier operational, command and control role with interagency and partner nations.” Here, ‘SOF’, shouldering a heavier load, takes on the imagery of weightlifting, or Atlas, though the multiple items suggests that circus juggling might be more appropriate. As Special Operations Forces prepare to ‘shoulder’ or juggle those tasks, the report is quick point out to leadership that “we still represent less than 4% of the DoD total budget. While maintaining cost effectiveness, we will

⁶³¹ The preceding and following quotes from *ibid.*, 2-4.

remain within our programmed manpower growth”.⁶³² That is important, because the Chairman’s Strategic Direction to the Joint Force orders special forces community to “Be affordable in every way possible”.⁶³³

The quotations listed above come just from the introduction to McRaven’s report. The *SOCOM 2020* report contains every aspect of ‘special forces’ that make this set of strategies and tactics so attractive to soldiers and to leaders in the day-to-day competition for status and survival.

Language plays a role in sustaining Wingate’s concepts and methods, both in special forces units and among more conventional formations. Within armies, especially those seemingly caught in an unwinnable war, there is an emphasis on personal accomplishment just as much (and often more) than unit accomplishment. It is a long established trend. In her biography of Stilwell, Barbara Tuchman took particular umbrage at the British Army’s ebullient depictions of failure.⁶³⁴

No nation has ever produced a military history of such verbal nobility as the British. Retreat or advance, win or lose, blunder or bravery, murderous folly or unyielding resolution, all emerge alike clothed in dignity and touched with glory. [...] Everyone is splendid: soldiers are staunch, commanders cool, the fighting magnificent. Whatever the fiasco, aplomb is unbroken. [...] Disasters are recorded with care and pride and become transmuted into things of beauty. [...] Other nations attempt but never quite achieve the same self-esteem.⁶³⁵

⁶³² Ibid., 7.

⁶³³ Ibid., 8.

⁶³⁴ Paul Fussell called this “raising the idiom” of war. Fussell, 175.

⁶³⁵ Tuchman, 557.

Tuchman, in making her case against the British, overstates other nations' honesty when it comes to depicting battles. It is true, for example, that some Americans admire the frankness of *The Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant*, but many more Americans suffer a fondness for the lofting, lying literature of 'the Old South'.⁶³⁶ With the proliferation of special forces, the United States now finds itself competing with the British—even surpassing them. The special forces soldiers, no matter the outcome, have “without faltering” become “ideal...masters of the night” as they maintain an “inexhaustible...ceaseless vigil” with “indomitable courage.” The words, which pour off the pages of the popular literature on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and every unit's website, are applied without discernment to America's tactical successes, tactical failures, and strategic emptiness. The use of the status-establishing words applied to special forces extends now all the way to the White House, where President Trump recently assured us that the three convicted war criminals he pardoned—Navy Seal Matthew Ghallagher, Green Beret Mathew

⁶³⁶ Of Robert E. Lee, whom in the battle of Chancellorsville was in the process of losing his best general and almost one-quarter of his force, it was later said: “[When] I looked at him in the complete fruition of the success which his genius, courage, and confidence in his army had won, I thought that it must have been from some such scene that men in ancient days ascended to the dignity of gods.” Clement A. Evans, *Confederate Military History: A Library of Confederate States History*, 12 vols., vol. 3 (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Company 1899), 390. High language for the low cause of maintaining the enslavement of African Americans. The text was written by Lee's aide-de-camp, which I first became aware of when reading Derek Smith, *The Gallant Dead: Union & Confederate Generals Killed in the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2005), 127. The memoirs of Grant were in part a rebuttal of the South's rewriting of history. Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant* (New York: C. L. Webster & co., 1885).

Golsteyn, and paratrooper Clint Lorance—were “the bravest men.” “Heroes,” really, if you don’t think about it.⁶³⁷

Would Wingate be proud to see the replication and frequent use of his methods in the twenty-first century? Would he accept any blame for their strategic failures? In both cases, probably not. He never forgave the strategic errors of his contemporaries. He would be unlikely to forgive ours. He would accept all honor, and celebrate (as we do) the soldiers who complete such arduous training and missions. But he would, as so often happens in human nature, defer the blame to someone else. The special forces units emanating from the United States have never met Wingate’s written standard of massive scale, command and control, and local involvement all oriented towards a clearly articulated global strategy; the more Wingate thought about decisive victory, the more he thought in terms of corps and army sized formations.⁶³⁸ Wingate’s own operations, however, never met his own standard for strategy. For soldiers, strategic goals are secondary to the internal competition within a coalition for organized violence. This basic problem ensures not only that no plan survives contact with the enemy (a common truism among soldiers), but that no plan survives the intragroup competition around the council table. Due to that competition, poor war plans are often adopted, as seen in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Vietnam, the longest and most strategically futile wars in American history.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁷ Andrew M. Bell and Thomas Gift to War on the Rocks, December 5, 2019, 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/12/war-crime-pardons-and-what-they-mean-for-the-military/>.

⁶³⁸ Anglim, *Orde Wingate: Unconventional Warrior from the 1920's to the Twenty-First Century*, 203-08.

⁶³⁹ Andrew J. Bacevich, "The Long War : A New History of U.S. National Security Policy since World War Ii," (2007); Ricks; ; Thomas E. Ricks et al., *The Generals : American Military Command from World War Ii to Today* (Ashland, Or.; Prince Frederick, MD: Blackstone Audio ; Distributed by Recorded Books,

These wars and occupations occur, in part, because American military officers misread the lessons of the Second World War, and then sell political leaders on cheap, low casualty, politically popular strikes on precisely defined targets which ultimately cannot be leveraged for strategic gains.⁶⁴⁰ The state of Israel, the site of Wingate's first moment of fame, has suffered a similar experience. Citizens are asked to trust elite soldiers. They are rarely asked to gird themselves against the fear of terrorism, or to consider the limitations of instrumental violence in an asymmetrical conflict.⁶⁴¹ The confusion is even more profound in America, where the absence of conscription enables almost total alienation between citizens and 'warriors' (the term soldiers is out of fashion);⁶⁴² the existence of a rootless military class has led to awful consequences in states throughout the world, including coups against democracy and the collapse of constitutional government.⁶⁴³

2012); James H Lebovic, *The Limits of U.S. Military Capability: Lessons from Vietnam and Iraq* (JHU Press, 2010).

⁶⁴⁰ Jenna Jordan, "Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark: Why Terrorist Groups Survive Decapitation Strikes," *International Security* 38, no. 4 (2014); Bryan C. Price, "Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism," *ibid.* 36 (2012). Price's promising title gives way to "mixed results", and finds evidence only for tactical stalling.

⁶⁴¹ Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 149.

⁶⁴² Andrew J. Bacevich, *Washington Rules : America's Path to Permanent War* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010); A. J. Bacevich, "The New American Militarism : How Americans Are Seduced by War," (2005).

⁶⁴³ Zoltan D. Barany, *The Soldier and the Changing State: Building Democratic Armies in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2012).

Today's special forces, which, unlike in Wingate's time, now require years of physical and mental training prior to deployment, remain rich in opportunities for personal honor, as soldiers are deployed throughout the world on behalf of the United States.⁶⁴⁴ When the operations go well or "come off" (and the public's support can be assured) we learn of the actions immediately, as with Wingate's survival in the first Chindit campaign in 1943, or the assassination of Osama Bin Laden in 2011.⁶⁴⁵ The rest we learn about later, as almost every week a new memoir is published arguing for the heroism of a Green Beret or a Navy Seal or a Delta Force operative.⁶⁴⁶ Occasionally, bad news leaks out, such as when Navy Seal Matt Gallagher stabbed to death a teen-aged boy who had his hands tied behind his back, or when a team of Rangers mistakenly shot and killed fellow soldier (and ex-NFL player) Pat Tillman.⁶⁴⁷ For the most part, however, the failures are often hidden away in classified documents, such as

⁶⁴⁴ Nick Turse, "Special Operations Forces Continue to Expand across the World—without Congressional Oversight," *The Nation* (2018), <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/special-operations-forces-continue-expand-across-world-without-congressional-oversight/>.

⁶⁴⁵ Macon Phillips, "Osama Bin Laden Dead: President Obama Addresses the Nation to Announce That the United States Has Killed Osama Bin Laden, the Leader of Al Qaeda," in *White House Archive, President Barack Obama* (Washington D.C. : United States Government, 2011); Burchett.

⁶⁴⁶ A quick sample of just three such books reveals the tensions within the 'SOF' or 'SOCOM' community. Christopher Drew Nicholas Kulish, Sean D. Naylor, "Among Navy Seals, a Split on Cashing in on the Brand," *The New York Times*, 3 April 2016 2016. Mark Owen and Kevin Maurer, *No Easy Day: The Autobiography of a Navy Seal : The Firsthand Account of the Mission That Killed Osama Bin Laden* (New York, N.Y: Dutton, 2012); Jack Murphy, *Murphy's Law: My Journey from Army Ranger and Green Beret to Investigative Journalist* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2019).

⁶⁴⁷ Jon Krakauer, *Where Men Win Glory: The Odyssey of Pat Tillman* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2009).

when Merrill's Marauders were spent on a useless objective; or when Wingate's brigade, during the first Chindit campaign, was effectively destroyed; or when Wingate attempted suicide after his campaign in Abyssinia. The personal honor and tactical victories are therefore highly public, while the costs can be highly classified.⁶⁴⁸ The costs, of course, move beyond the explicit loss of human life and dignity, and into the shifty value of government currency. The detailed use of public funds for constant special forces deployments, year after year, also remains a carefully guarded secret lest a line-item budget betray the as-of-yet undisclosed operations occurring throughout the world, even as I write this. Furthermore, the abandonment of traditional concepts of what it means to "hold" a strategic area means that, compared with conventional war, modern war is seemingly cost efficient. It is certainly rich in opportunities for personal honor, if not strategic success.

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⁶⁴⁸ Haynes, "The hidden costs of strategy by special operations," *War on the Rocks*.

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